

# Across the Tasman: Narratives of New Zealand Migrants to and from Australia, 1965–95.

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# Abstract

New Zealanders are the second biggest migrant group in Australia. During the latter half of the twentieth century growing numbers of Kiwis crossed the Tasman in search of happiness, love, financial success, adventure, and new beginnings. And yet historians have not yet made a qualitative study of this significant migratory trend. Kiwis in Australia are in many ways invisible migrants. This thesis fills the historiographical gap by investigating the personal experiences of New Zealanders who chose to move to Australia from 1965 to 1995. Written and oral narratives provide the sources for studying Kiwi migrants' personal motives, experiences and reflections.

Migrants' narratives reveal what it was like for New Zealanders to decide to leave New Zealand, arrive in Australia, and settle in to their new country. Migration is an ongoing experience; accordingly Kiwis' long-term experiences of staying in touch with New Zealand, making Australia home, and returning to New Zealand are also investigated. This thesis argues that New Zealanders in Australia had a migrant experience, even if it was milder than that of other Australian migrant groups.

In particular, New Zealand migrants' relationships affected, and were affected by migration. Personal narratives highlight that the decision to move country always impacted on migrants' connections with family and friends. Migration motives were often based in individuals' personal relational situations, and concerns for loved ones. Once in Australia, trans-Tasman networks sustained migrants emotionally but also caused feelings of homesickness. Creating networks with others in Australia was vital in helping migrants find companionship, practical support, and a sense of belonging. For some migrants, the strain of sustaining relationships across the Tasman led them to return to New Zealand.

Oral history methodology and narrative analysis are key components of this thesis. Personal narratives not only illuminate migrants' private experiences of migration; they also demonstrate that migration is a key decision which influences migrants into the present. This thesis argues that analysing the memories, narrative structure, reflections, and regrets in Kiwi migrants' oral histories uncovers how migrants compose life stories which validate their migration decisions and give meaning to their current situation.

# Introduction

In July 2011 Statistics New Zealand reported that New Zealand permanent migration to Australia had hit a 32 year high point for the month of June. Analysts attributed this trend to the series of powerful and damaging earthquakes which hit Christchurch from September 2010, through to June 2011.<sup>1</sup> As a resident of Christchurch during this period I personally witnessed the grief, dislocation, and emotional strain caused by deaths, liquefaction, ruined homes, collapsed buildings, and constant aftershocks. I understood why so many shaken Cantabrians fled their broken city for the relative warmth and safety of Australia. Indeed, I was particularly interested in this migration pattern as during this period I was writing up my thesis on New Zealand migration to Australia in the latter twentieth century. The earthquake-driven peak in outmigration to Australia supported my core argument that people migrate for personal and emotional reasons, just as commonly as external economic or political factors. In the wake of the Christchurch earthquakes, some New Zealanders moved to Australia to find work. But many others left to escape their broken sewerage, children's nightmares, and painful memories of lost friends and family members.

Media coverage of this migration trend was largely negative in tone, and this is consistent with recent perceptions of New Zealand migration to Australia. Newspaper articles echoed the familiar panicked refrains of being 'left behind' by Australia; of a 'brain drain'; and New Zealand's sliding standard of living. A *New Zealand Herald* article from June 2011 quoted sociologist and immigration expert Paul Spoonley of Massey University who warned that the exodus was 'a very dangerous sign' for the New Zealand economy. Spoonley stated that as New Zealand migrants were often in their prime working age and had children, New Zealand was 'losing two generations of Kiwis at least'.<sup>2</sup> This language repeats earlier public fears about an unstoppable flood of New Zealanders deserting their homeland. Concerns about New Zealand's high rate of emigration peaked in 2000 with the publication of a full page advertisement in the *New Zealand Herald* entitled 'A Generation Lost'. This advertisement blamed the Labour Government's policies for the exodus of young Kiwis and touched a raw

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand, "International Travel and Migration: June 2011," (21 July 2011), [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/population/Migration/IntTravelAndMigration\\_HOTPJun11/Commentary.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/population/Migration/IntTravelAndMigration_HOTPJun11/Commentary.aspx) (accessed 26 September 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Lincoln Tan and Jarrod Booker, "Record Kiwi Exodus to Oz," *New Zealand Herald*, 22 June 2011.

nerve with the wider public.<sup>3</sup> Successive governments attempted to take a more positive approach to the large numbers of New Zealand expatriates by creating the Kea network. But the issue of the Kiwi ‘brain drain’ is still a topic which has the power to arouse strong reactions amongst New Zealanders.<sup>4</sup>

This pessimistic, economically-focused coverage of New Zealand migration to Australia is a one-sided representation. It fails to take into account New Zealanders’ complex motives for moving to Australia and their ongoing migration experiences. My research provides a needful addition to media articles in search of a quick story and quantitative government reports. This thesis puts migrants and their continuing stories centre-stage. Migration is a journey, which influences migrants for their whole lives. Kiwis who move to Australia are neither traitors, nor faceless participants in a social trend. Rather they are individuals with their own complex mix of hopes, dreams, problems, and relationships.

Although New Zealand migration to Australia is a significant demographic trend, it has been neglected by historians. Chapter One outlines how this thesis contributes new approaches to literature in this field as well as tracing my theoretical and methodological influences.

Although demographic and sociology research on Kiwis in Australia exists, there is no oral history or more traditional descriptive history about Kiwis who moved to Australia during the 1960s–1990s. Australian migration historians have largely ignored the phenomenon, focusing instead on other more foreign migrant groups. This thesis has three key arguments, each of which fill an historiographical gap.

Firstly, I argue that New Zealanders in Australia are a migrant group and their experiences should be studied using migration studies approaches. Secondly, I investigate the hitherto neglected human aspect of migration, arguing that Kiwis’ relationships and personal desires play a vital role in all stages of their migrations to Australia. Finally, I argue that analysing Kiwi migrants’ composure of retrospective life interviews reveals the significance of migration to individual narrators. Chapter One also identifies the key influences on my oral history methodology. I recognise that oral history interviews are a shared experience and that the recordings and transcripts are inevitably influenced by my own research interests and

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Poole, “A Generation Lost,” *New Zealand Herald*, 5 October 2000, A6.

<sup>4</sup> See Alan Gamlen, “Creating and Destroying Diaspora Strategies,” (Oxford: International Migration Institute, April 2011): 10.

interactions with narrators. Accordingly I describe the interview process, my relationships with participants, ethical considerations, transcription and data analysis.

In order for my findings to be convincing and historically meaningful I situate them in a wider context. Chapter Two provides demographic and historical context to New Zealand migration to Australia. I also demonstrate that my selection of interview participants is broadly representative of my survey group and of wider demographic findings about New Zealand migrants to Australia.

Chapter Three looks in detail at the reasons why New Zealanders chose to move to Australia. I argue that most Kiwis migrated to Australia for a number of different reasons. While one motive might be stronger than the others, relationship, economic, lifestyle and enabling factors often worked together to create a strong case for leaving New Zealand. In contrast to demographic work which often focuses on economic causes of migration, this chapter argues that relationships were generally a more powerful motive for migration. Another key finding is that accidental migration was common amongst young childless Kiwis who originally only intended to briefly visit Australia.

The following two chapters in this thesis focus on New Zealanders' move to Australia as a migration experience. Since this migration trend has not been addressed by historians there is little qualitative investigation into the experience of moving from New Zealand to Australia. Chapter Four looks at the process of leaving New Zealand. Drawing inspiration from studies of other migrant groups, I examine how Kiwis decided to move to Australia and their preparations for moving. As this thesis has a strong thematic focus on relationships, I also examine migrants' families' responses to their migration. Finally, I describe New Zealanders' farewells and journeys across the Tasman by sea and air. This chapter reveals that many New Zealand migrants made relatively few preparations before moving and completed all their arrangements in a relatively short time. Family responses were more influential than organizational stress in setting the tone of migrants' departures.

The ease of moving to Australia could be deceptive. Chapter Five outlines the ways in which New Zealanders experienced Australia as migrants. Migrants often had strong sensory memories of their first few days in Australia; many were surprised at how different Australia's rural and urban environments were to New Zealand. Most Kiwis also experienced



teasing comments on their accent and nationality. Although these experiences were comparatively mild compared to the discrimination and dislocation faced by many other migrant groups, they still constitute a migrant experience. Over time Kiwis settled in to Australian society seamlessly, becoming the most invisible of all Australian migrants. Kiwis' strategies for finding work and a place to live were indistinguishable from those of native Australians. Nonetheless, even years after their initial migration, many New Zealanders continued to feel that Australian society was more sexist and racist than New Zealand. In particular, Aboriginal Australians' social disadvantages were a constant reminder to New Zealanders of their different national history.

Finding connections in Australia was the main way that Kiwis became settled in Australia. Drawing on migration theories of network formation, Chapter Six considers the ways in which Kiwis made friends with native Australians, New Zealanders, and other migrants in Australia. These new connections provided practical support, company, and a sense of fitting in. Most New Zealand migrants displayed low levels of 'groupness'; their friendships were usually based around similar interests, family situations, location, and workplace rather than a shared nationality. Kiwi migrants' nuclear relationships with Australian romantic partners and children were crucial in anchoring them to their new home.

Chapter Seven focuses on migrants' feelings of national belonging, longing for New Zealand, and national identification. I trace Kiwis' feelings of homesickness for New Zealand and gradual sense of belonging in Australia through their engagement with cultural symbols: landscapes, food, material culture, and sporting events. This chapter also argues that migrants' patronage of Kiwi food, products, and sports teams was also a way of publicly identifying themselves as New Zealanders. Most New Zealand migrants identified as Kiwis even after they felt that Australia was their family home. Belonging and identity were not necessarily the same thing for New Zealanders in Australia.

Kiwi migrants allayed feelings of homesickness by keeping in touch with family and friends in New Zealand. Chapter Eight argues that New Zealand migrants were (and still are) very transnational in their personal connections with New Zealand-based kin. In times of emotional stress, particularly for women, New Zealand families' support and communication were essential. Migrants used letters, phone calls, and more recently internet, to stay in touch. Because of the ease of travel between the two nations, visits between New Zealand and

Australia were relatively common. Although connections with New Zealand changed over time, they remained important to many migrants.

Part of this thesis's aim is to show that migration is an ongoing journey. A large number of my participants returned to New Zealand, made multiple moves across the Tasman, travelled to other international destinations, or moved within Australia. Chapter Nine considers these continuing moves, in particular the experience of returning to New Zealand. I argue that return migration arose chiefly out of relationship and lifestyle motives, but was often more difficult than expected. Rather than simply slotting back into their homeland, migrants often had to make subtle readjustments.

As the main sources for this research are oral history interviews, the last two chapters of this thesis engage with individual life stories using approaches arising from memory studies and narrative analysis. Chapter Ten argues that being aware of the content and construction of narrators' life stories provides new insights. I identify the types of memories which were mentioned most frequently in narrators' life stories. Often memories which seem unrelated to migration indirectly provide insight into how migrants viewed their move to Australia. The chapter also looks at how migrants used causation and reflection to make sense of their life decisions from the perspective of the present. The emphasis on memory, causation, and counterfactual reflections also lays the basis for the in-depth analysis of three migrants' stories in Chapter Eleven.

In Chapter Eleven I adapt a narrative analysis methodology from feminist psychology called the *Listening Guide* and apply it to three life histories. This approach clarifies my own method of analysis but also provides a deeper understanding of how individuals create their narratives. A close reading of migrants' use of memory, causation and counterfactual reflection captures insights which might not be otherwise clear. It reveals key themes and the motivations influencing the construction of these migrants' life stories.

The retrospective nature of oral history and personal narratives means that my narrators remembered their migration through the lenses of reflection, nostalgia, and accumulated wisdom. I have used oral history and narrative analysis methodologies to make sense of migrants' memories and constructed life histories. This provides the opportunity to look at migration from a long-term perspective and uncover the continuing and changing

ramifications of the decision to move to Australia. This thesis relies on the stories of Kiwis who all moved at least 15 years ago but its findings are still relevant to more recent trans-Tasman migrants. The experiences of New Zealanders who migrated to Australia during the 1960–1990s also provide insights that are applicable to today’s migrants. Past migrants’ stories suggest lessons and possibilities for potential migrants. While the historical context may have moved on, people’s desires for meaning, love, adventure, success, and happiness remain unchanged. Moreover this thesis helps us understand why and how people leave New Zealand for Australia, and then come back again.

# Chapter One: Historiography and Method

This thesis is the first to investigate the personal experiences of New Zealanders who migrated to and from Australia in the late twentieth century. By using oral histories and written narratives I highlight an important social movement, providing insights into how Kiwis experienced their move to Australia. Although this study is original it is also influenced by and indebted to research in related disciplines. Historians accept that their work is affected by their intellectual context and strive to interact with other academics' ideas, findings, and theories. The process of adopting, modifying, or discarding historiography helps historians situate their work in the wider field but also enables them to contribute original research. One purpose of this chapter is to fit this thesis into its wider historiographical context. I signal the academic ideas which influence my analysis of the stories of New Zealand migrants to Australia. This chapter also outlines the oral history methods I use and positions these methods in the wider oral history discipline. In addition, Chapter One summarizes the existing literature on New Zealand migrants to Australia, demonstrating how this thesis fills significant gaps in the study of trans-Tasman migration.

## Existing literature on trans-Tasman migration

Demographers have investigated the changing and significant patterns of New Zealanders' post-war migrations to Australia thoroughly. Because of its quantitative nature, demographic work focuses on economic factors, statistical trends in population movement, and post-migration settlement. Demographers provide information on numbers of trans-Tasman migrants, their socioeconomic status, destinations, and subsequent movements. The key text in this area is *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, edited by Gordon A. Carmichael and published in 1993.<sup>1</sup> This book outlines the movements of New Zealanders to and within Australia from the eighteenth century through until the 1980s. Research from the early 2000s by Richard Bedford and Graeme Hugo considers the implications of New Zealanders' current position as the second largest migrant group in Australia. These authors compare New Zealand migrants' and native born Australians'

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon A. Carmichael, "Executive Summary," in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993).

demographic status.<sup>2</sup> More recently, Jacques Poot and Lynda Sanderson discuss the impact of the 2001 Social Security agreement which deprived New Zealand migrants of certain Australian social security benefits until they become permanent residents. Poot and Sanderson conclude that Kiwis who migrated after the law change have lower attachment to Australia.<sup>3</sup> Poot, Sanderson and McCann also examine New Zealand migrants' trips home and further international migration. They reveal that trans-Tasman migration patterns are far more complex and diversified, with higher levels of return movement, than traditional paradigms suggest.<sup>4</sup> Australian and New Zealand government departments also publish reports based on censuses. For example, the recent 2010 Australian Bureau of Statistics' report on New Zealanders in Australia describes the distribution, movement, and socioeconomic status of New Zealanders in Australia.<sup>5</sup> Demographic research provides essential context for my study, outlines the extent of trans-Tasman migration, and allows me to measure the representativeness of participants within the wider context of trans-Tasman migration.

Some historians and sociologists have studied trans-Tasman migration but most of their research focuses on nineteenth century movements or specific interest groups. Historians of the New Zealand gold rushes, settler society, and labour movements explore the frequent population interchange between Australia and New Zealand. These historians are keenly aware that trans-Tasman migration and connections are integral to Australasian history.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Bedford, Elsie Ho, and Graeme Hugo, "Trans-Tasman Migration in Context: Recent Flows of New Zealanders Revisited," *People and Place* 11, no. 4 (2003). Graeme Hugo, "New Zealanders in Australia in 2001," *New Zealand Population Review* 30, no. 1 & 2 (2004).

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Poot and Lynda Sanderson, *Changes in Social Security Eligibility and the International Mobility of New Zealand Citizens in Australia* (Hamilton: Population Studies Centre University of Waikato, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Lynda Sanderson, "International Mobility of New Migrants to Australia," *International Migration Review* 43, no. 2 (2009); Jacques Poot, "Trans-Tasman Migration, Transnationalism, and Economic Development in Australasia," *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* 19, no. 3 (2010); Philip McCann, Jacques Poot, and Lynda Sanderson, "Migration, Relationship Capital, and International Travel: Theory and Evidence," *Journal of Economic Geography* 10, no. 3 (2010).

<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, "New Zealanders in Australia," *Australian Social Trends*, no. 4102.0 (September 2010). *Australian Social Trends* (September 2010), <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features50Sep+2010> (accessed 19 August 2011).

<sup>6</sup> For example, on gold fields: Philip Ross May, *The West Coast Gold Rushes* (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1967); Patrick O' Farrell, *Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand* (Sydney: New South Wales University Press, 1990); Lyndon Fraser, *Castles of Gold: A History of New Zealand's West Coast Irish* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007). On settler migration: Rollo Arnold, *New Zealand's Burning: The Settlers' World in the Mid 1880s* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1994); Jock Phillips and Terry J. Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland & Scotland, 1800–1945* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2008). On labour history: James Bennett, *Rats and Revolutionaries: The Labour Movement in Australia and New Zealand 1890–1940* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2004).

Rollo Arnold's research in particular looks at the 'perennial interchange' of trans-Tasman migrants during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>7</sup> By contrast, research examining the personal experiences of New Zealanders who moved to Australia in the years following World War II is scarce. Philippa Mein Smith's and Peter Hempenstall's account of trans-Tasman migration covers the post-war period but is a helpful summary of overarching trends rather than qualitative research.<sup>8</sup> A few researchers investigate the situation of Māori in Australia. Paul Hamer studies 'Mozzies'' motives for moving, cultural lives, transnational relationships, voting patterns, and use of Te Reo.<sup>9</sup> Hamer concludes that Māori in Australia often find personal success and freedom, but struggle with retaining their culture and language. Although Hamer's work on Māori in Australia is useful he necessarily omits Pākehā experiences. Rachel Buchanan's essay 'Ngati Skippy' reflects on what it means to be Māori in Australia and describes her feelings of confusion about where she belongs.<sup>10</sup> Research on the wider New Zealand migration experience is limited. Alison Green's 2006 sociology PhD thesis considers New Zealanders' motivations for migrating to Australia and how the move affects their national identity.<sup>11</sup> Green argues New Zealand migrants retain their Kiwi identity and transnational links with New Zealand, but are usually positive about their move to Australia. While Green investigates migrants' motives and identities from a social sciences perspective she ignores other facets of long-term migration and fails to use migrant narratives meaningfully. Although the New Zealand Ministry of Culture and Heritage gave significant funding in 2010 to oral history projects on New Zealand-Australia connections, these grants provide only for the recording of the interviews and deal with

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<sup>7</sup> Rollo Arnold, "Some Australasian Aspects of New Zealand Life, 1890–1913," *New Zealand Journal of History* 4, no. 1 (1970); ———, "Family or Strangers? Trans-Tasman Migrants, 1870–1920." Paper presented at the Australia–New Zealand: Aspects of a Relationship, Proceedings of the Stout Research Centre Eighth Annual Conference, (Wellington, 6–8 September 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Chapter Three "Living Together", Philippa Mein Smith, Peter J. Hempenstall, and Shaun Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Paul Hamer, *Māori in Australia: Nga Māori I Te Ao Moemoea* (Wellington: Te Puni Kōwhiri, 2007); ———, "Māori in Australia: Voting Rights and Behaviour," *Policy Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (September 2008); ———, "The Impact on Te Reo Māori of Trans-Tasman Migration," (Wellington: Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University, July 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Rachel Buchanan, "Ngati Skippy: At Home and Heartsick across the Ditch," *Griffith Review* 29 (2010).

<sup>11</sup> Alison E. Green, "New Zealand Migrants to Australia: Social Construction of Migrant Identity" (PhD thesis, Bond University, 2006).

specific niche groups.<sup>12</sup> There is a significant gap in the New Zealand historiography on the experiences of late twentieth century Kiwi migrants to Australia.

Another historiographical trend is Australian migration historians' exclusion of New Zealanders from their work. Australian historians acknowledge the large numbers of New Zealanders who moved to Australia since the late 1960s but fail to describe or explain the phenomenon in any detail. Migration historians James Jupp and John Lack omit case studies of Kiwi migrants' integration into Australian society from their books.<sup>13</sup> Eric Richards' recent book on Australian immigration, *Destination Australia*, has very little on New Zealanders.<sup>14</sup> By contrast, Greek, Italian, Yugoslavian, Jewish, and Maltese migrants to Australia, along with many other ethnic groups, all have numerous histories dedicated to their experiences. British migrants, whom Thomson and Hammerton claim are Australia's 'invisible migrants', are the subject of a number of migration studies.<sup>15</sup>

This blind spot in Australian immigration history is likely due to New Zealanders' ease in migrating and fitting in to Australian society. New Zealanders' access to Australia is unrestricted and informal. New Zealanders speak the same language in a similar accent, often using the same colloquialisms. Their integration to Australian society does not cause large scale social or humanitarian problems. New Zealanders spread themselves demographically in similar patterns to Australians. Jose Moya in his work with Spanish migrants to Argentina from 1850 to 1930 found a similar pattern. Culturally similar migrants – cousins as Moya terms them – lack the exotic 'otherness' or experiences of subjugation which attract scholarly

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<sup>12</sup> Some of the projects are: Greek female migrants from Australia to New Zealand; Taranaki Iwi in Australia; Australian influences on New Zealand gay and lesbian communities, and Cross Tasman migration from a small community in the 1950s. "Awards in Oral History for 2010," Ministry for Culture and Heritage, <http://www.mch.govt.nz/funding-nz-culture/funding-sources/new-zealand-oral-history-awards-0> (accessed 3 November 2010).

<sup>13</sup> James Jupp, *Immigration*, Australian Retrospectives (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1991); ———, *From White Australia to Woomera: The Story of Australian Immigration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); John F. Lack and Jacqueline Templeton, *Bold Experiment: A Documentary History of Australian Immigration since 1945* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Eric Richards, *Destination Australia: Migration to Australia since 1901* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> A. James Hammerton and Alistair Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 9.

study.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, to Australian migration historians, New Zealanders in Australia are the most ‘invisible’ migrants.

Indeed, there is no comprehensive history of Kiwi migration to Australia which studies the continuing migrant experience and analyses personal stories. And yet, the trans-Tasman interchange is an integral aspect of New Zealand’s and Australia’s post-World War II migration patterns. New Zealanders’ sustained and sizeable migration to Australia is a significant historical event. Moreover, the proximity of the two nations makes the migration process different to other long distance migration movements. Demographers recognize the importance of New Zealand migration to Australia but their research focuses on broad trends and contexts rather than human stories. Historians have mostly ignored late twentieth-century trans-Tasman migration. While a number of social science studies on New Zealand migrants to Australia exist, these are partial in scope. While these publications use interviews or surveys, they do not adopt oral history methodology or a traditionally historical approach.

This thesis advances three key arguments dealing with themes which are not adequately addressed in the existing literature. Firstly, I argue that the large numbers of New Zealanders who moved to Australia do qualify as migrants. An important aspect of my analytical approach is to apply migration studies theories to New Zealanders in Australia. This includes an assessment of Kiwis’ ongoing migrant experiences, which continue throughout their life journey. Secondly, I argue that migrants’ personal desires and relationships – which are not represented in demographic analysis – are a vital component of their migration experience. This thesis uncovers the impact of individuals’ aspirations, goals, and relationships with acquaintances, family, friends, partners, and children, on the migration experience. Oral history interviews enable me to directly investigate migrants’ private motives and influences. I also use transnational and network theories to highlight migrants’ experiences of interconnectedness. Thirdly, this thesis argues that analysing oral history narratives is invaluable in revealing how migrants understand and construct their past migration experiences from their current perspective. My research uses memory theory and narrative analysis to uncover how narrators tell migration stories which validate their past decisions.

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<sup>16</sup> Jose C. Moya, *Cousins and Strangers: Spanish Immigrants in Buenos Aires, 1850–1930* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 1.



## Migration studies: themes and approaches

Migration researchers have deepened their understandings of how to explore migrants' experiences in the past few decades. Since the late 1980s, scholars increasingly frame their work in terms of diaspora, transnationalism, and networks. Histories of other migrant groups provide ideas about themes to explore and questions to ask of New Zealanders who migrated to Australia. In this thesis I draw on ideas about migration factors, continuing migration experiences, transnationalism, and networks to frame my enquiry.

### *Migration factors*

The issue of why people decide to leave is a key theme in migration studies. Since the late 1980s many migration scholars developed their approach far beyond a simplistic categorization of 'push' and 'pull' factors. John Bodnar's *The Transplanted*, published in 1985, investigates the experiences of migrants to urban America during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Bodnar argues this vast people movement was due to specific transformations in America as well as immigrant homelands, and arose out of pragmatic family-household decision making.<sup>17</sup> Bodnar's approach foreshadows a recent migration studies directive which stresses the importance of considering the conditions in both sending and receiving countries that create economic and social asymmetries. Unequal development between two nations, as well as the ways they interconnect, explain why large groups of people move through a particular migration corridor.<sup>18</sup> Thus, my research focuses on conditions in both New Zealand and Australia, and how they are linked, in order to explain why so many Kiwis choose to move to Australia.

A second important trend in studying migration factors is including migrants' personal motives and relationships. Migration research based on statistics instead of personal accounts tends to focus on broad policy and economic factors.<sup>19</sup> But as Jose Moya argues, immigrants are not pawns at the mercy of impersonal factors; rather they are wilful agents acting within

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<sup>17</sup> John Bodnar, *The Transplanted* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

<sup>18</sup> Ruben Puentes et al., "Towards an Assessment of Migration, Development and Human Rights Links: Conceptual Framework and New Strategic Inductions." Peoples' Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights IV Global Forum (Mexico City, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> For example, Patrick Ongley and David Pearson's article comparing international migration to New Zealand, Australia and Canada focuses on immigration levels, economic climate, government immigration policies and population profiles. Patrick Ongley and David Pearson, "Post-1945 International Migration: New Zealand, Australia and Canada Compared," *International Migration Review* 29, no. 3 (Autumn 1995).

the restraints of external structures and forces.<sup>20</sup> Migration systems theory and migration networks theory, both developed since the 1990s, consider overarching institutional factors as well as migrants' own networks, practices and beliefs. Network theories particularly emphasise the role of the family in the migration decision.<sup>21</sup> As Angela McCarthy argues in her recent book, *Personal Narratives of Scottish and Irish migration*, attributing migration to one sole factor is futile. Rather researchers must 'search beyond the overarching explanations for mobility that are frequently proffered' and instead develop models incorporating a number of interplaying factors.<sup>22</sup> However, Moya warns that merely sorting reasons for migration into groups is not necessarily helpful; it 'organizes more than it explains'.<sup>23</sup> My analysis of Kiwi motives for migrating to Australia identifies the factors, both personal and structural, which enable migrants' decisions, and then distinguishes which factors are more influential in the decision-making process.

### ***Migration as a continuing experience***

The decision to move country is only the beginning; migration and subsequent adaptation is an experience which resonates for years, even generations after arrival. Alistair Thomson states that one of the key motives of migration oral histories is to explore the processes by which migrants individually and collectively establish themselves in a new region.<sup>24</sup> In *Ten Pound Poms*, Hammerton and Thomson describe Britons' experiences in Australia by covering a diverse range of themes: first impressions, responses to the Australian environment, differences in Australian society's class structure, missing England, the process of making friends, anti-English prejudices, hostel experiences, finding a home, working life, backpacking experiences, starting a family, and homesickness.<sup>25</sup> By contrast, Mandy Thomas's work focuses on how Vietnamese migrants in Australia use space by studying their clothing, homes, and urban areas.<sup>26</sup> The variety of approach amongst migration histories is due to researcher biases and differing experiences of diverse migrant groups. As Castles and Miller point out, migrants' adaptation depends on their specific gender, ethnicity, life stage,

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<sup>20</sup> Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 203.

<sup>21</sup> Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 4th ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 27–9.

<sup>22</sup> Angela McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration, 1921–65: 'For Spirit and Adventure'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 37.

<sup>23</sup> Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 386.

<sup>24</sup> Alistair Thomson, "Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies," *Oral History* 27, no. 1 (1999): 24.

<sup>25</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*.

<sup>26</sup> Mandy Thomas, *Dreams in the Shadows: Vietnamese-Australian Lives in Transition* (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1999).

and social class as well as their changing interactions with the State, institutions, and groups of their new country.<sup>27</sup> But these varied approaches do generally research migrants' experiences from a long-term perspective. Similarly, this thesis uses full life histories to chart Kiwi migrants' ongoing and changing migration experiences.

### ***Transnational themes***

This thesis situates New Zealand migrants to Australia within a transnational rather than diasporic framework. Diaspora is the term originally used to describe forced Jewish, Greek, and Armenian dispersions. In recent years, diaspora's meaning has become imprecise as academics apply it to an ever-widening range of people movements.<sup>28</sup> Diaspora scholars, Kevin Kenny and Rogers Brubaker, both agree a diaspora has three common elements: firstly, dispersion from a homeland, usually forced or traumatic; secondly, the displaced group's identity, loyalty and sense of belonging are orientated to a real or imagined homeland with the group being committed to its restoration, maintenance, or creation; and thirdly, the diasporic group retains a distinctive identity which cuts across state boundaries and is sustained by relationships, feelings of alienation, and cultural maintenance.<sup>29</sup> Some scholars, such as Steven Vertovec, define diaspora more elastically, as 'an imagined community living away from a professed place of origin'.<sup>30</sup> More recently, diaspora research has begun to investigate how and why these groups emerge and dissipate.<sup>31</sup> This approach reveals that people are more or less 'diasporic' in different circumstances. Events affecting a homeland such as wars, natural disasters, political campaigns, sports events, and celebrations can galvanise or lessen links to home.<sup>32</sup>

Although some researchers describe New Zealanders living overseas as a diaspora, in my study Kiwis in Australia do not fit neatly into a diasporic framework.<sup>33</sup> Firstly, although specific events may momentarily pull Kiwis in Australia closer together (for example, the Christchurch earthquakes and Rugby World Cup in 2011) this is the exception rather than the

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<sup>27</sup> Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 41.

<sup>28</sup> As Brubaker states 'if everyone is diasporic then no one is distinctively so'. Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 3.

<sup>29</sup> Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 5; Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study," *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 142.

<sup>30</sup> Steven Vertovec, "Cosmopolitanism in Attitude, Practice and Competence," *MMG Working Paper 09-08* (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, 2009): 5.

<sup>31</sup> For example, Stéphane Dufoix, *Diasporas* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 2008).

<sup>32</sup> Gamlen, "Creating and Destroying Diaspora Strategies," 6.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

rule. As Chapter Six argues, in their day to day lives, Kiwis show low levels of groupness. In addition, the term diaspora, even when used broadly, tends to conjure up mental images of forced, traumatic, and final migration. Kiwis' moves to Australia are generally none of these things. And finally, unlike Alan Gamlen who focuses on New Zealand governments' efforts to rouse a 'diasporic' feeling among Kiwi expatriates, this thesis investigates Kiwis' personal connections with home.<sup>34</sup> This thesis argues that Kiwis' trans-Tasman connections usually centre around individual relationships rather than nationalist concerns.

Transnational theory, which has also gained prominence in the last 20 years, is more suited to understanding New Zealand migration to Australia. Transnational authors argue that growing linkages, population mobility, and networks in a globalising world demand an approach which describes a new type of migrant existence.<sup>35</sup> Steven Vertovec, in his 1999 article 'Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism', defines transnationalism as the 'multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states'.<sup>36</sup> Kiwis in Australia usually do not participate in organized transnational links to the extent of many other migrant groups. Most do not participate in national organisations, send home remittances, or join New Zealand groups in Australia. But Kiwi migrants' connections with New Zealand at the informal personal level are prolific and best explored through a transnational approach. In this thesis I use transnational ideas to consider migrants' multiple links, communications, and visits across the Tasman.

A further transnational approach, very relevant to Kiwis in Australia, is the subsequent journeying of migrants after their initial departure. Improving transport and communication technologies facilitate the growth of circular or temporary mobility in which people travel and migrate regularly between two or more places.<sup>37</sup> This is particularly true for New Zealanders in Australia who travel across the Tasman with ease. While demographers have charted the homing patterns of New Zealand migrants, as yet no research puts a human face

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, "Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration," in *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered*, ed. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton (New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1992), 1, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Steven Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999): 447.

<sup>37</sup> Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 30.

to the statistics.<sup>38</sup> Marjory Harper in her introduction to the 2005 book *Emigrant Homecomings* argues that the return movements of migrants are generally neglected: ‘little attempt has been made to consider the motives of returners, the mechanisms by which they maintained links with the various places they had been to, or the economic, social, or cultural impact they had on the adopted countries they left and the homelands they returned to’.<sup>39</sup> I address this historiographical gap by including the experiences of return migrants from Australia and highlighting the transnational connections which convinced them to return home.

In addition to physical journeys of migration, relational connections are a vital aspect of New Zealand migrants’ transnational experiences. This thesis investigates the role of relationships in the migration process. How do they affect decisions, change as a result of migration, and exist across borders? Bill Jordan and Frank Duvell state that migration is rarely an isolated decision but rather a collective action involving families and other contacts. These networks involve regular transactions and communications across national borders.<sup>40</sup> Alistair Thomson argues migration oral histories also need to study the processes migrants use to establish themselves in a new region and recreate networks from their place of origin.<sup>41</sup> Ethnographers, sociologists, and oral historians model a wide array of different ways of looking at both transnational and local relationships in migration. For example, Mary Chamberlain’s oral histories of Barbadian migrants to Britain show that migrants’ motives and identities are complex. An individual’s seemingly economically motivated move often also involves a family history of social and geographic mobility or a regional culture of migration.<sup>42</sup> Karen Fog Olwig in her recent book, *Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks*, considers the concept of home. She argues places remain important sites of personal belonging for migrants only as long as they maintain close

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<sup>38</sup> Jacqueline Lidgard and Christopher Gilson, “Return Migration of New Zealanders: Shuttle and Circular Migrants,” *New Zealand Population Review* 28, no. 1 (2002).

<sup>39</sup> Marjory Harper, *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000* (Manchester ; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 2.

<sup>40</sup> Bill Jordan and Frank Duvall, *Migration: The Boundaries of Equality and Justice*, Themes for the 21st Century (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2003), 63, 73.

<sup>41</sup> Thomson, “Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies,” 24, 28.

<sup>42</sup> Mary Chamberlain, “Family and Identity: Barbadian Migrants to Britain,” in *Migration and Identity*, ed. Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes, *Memory and Narrative* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 120–1.

relations to people in this site.<sup>43</sup> Louise Ryan investigates how female Irish nurses in Britain access support through local and transnational networks.<sup>44</sup> A major goal of the interviews I conducted was to find out how relationships on either side of the Tasman affected New Zealanders' migration experience in Australia.

## Memory and narrative

The concluding chapters of this thesis engage with the more abstract topics of memory and narrative. Both of these approaches have become popular in recent decades amongst different disciplines in the academic community; as a result there is a vast amount of literature on the subject. Oral historians are particularly interested in these issues as they are first-hand witnesses to the process of remembering and creating stories. This next section outlines the memory and narrative theories used in this thesis.

### *Memory*

Memory is not an easy term to define. It is a mental category we use to make sense of complex aspects of human behaviour and experience. Historian Geoffrey Cubitt notes that memory is always mixed up with other things: our learning, perception, sense of identity, awareness of time, habits of narration, social interaction, and sense of tradition. Memory may refer either to the mind's systems for retention of data, the specific data retrieved, or to an individual's awareness of a past dimension.<sup>45</sup> For the purposes of this thesis memory is defined as people's recollections of their past from a present day perspective.

There are two basic categories of memory: short-term and long-term. Short-term or working memory is information (sensory or factual) which is stored for a brief period. Long-term memory has several different sub-categories. One form is implicit or procedural memory which involves unconscious forms of knowledge such as riding a bike. Another form is declarative or explicit memory which involves the conscious retrieval of data that can be put into words. This data might be semantic (factual information) or an episodic account of personal experiences.<sup>46</sup> This latter type of long-term memory forms the basis of the migration

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<sup>43</sup> Karen Fog Olwig, *Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 12.

<sup>44</sup> Louise Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood: The Experiences of Irish Nurses in Britain," *Sociology* 41, no. 2 (April 2007).

<sup>45</sup> Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 6, 67.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 68; John Henderson, *Memory and Forgetting*, Routledge Modular Psychology (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 23.

stories used in this thesis. These memories from an individual's life are also described as archival or autobiographical. Studies have found that events are likely to endure in an individual's memory if they are perceived as emotional at the time, relatively unique, or identified later on as a turning point.<sup>47</sup>

Although memory forms the basis for this thesis, it is in some ways an unreliable source. Simply put, individuals do not always remember correctly. The human qualities of forgetfulness, absentmindedness, misattribution, suggestibility, personal bias, and suppressing unpleasant information all work against the retention of factually accurate memories.<sup>48</sup> Individuals' recollections are susceptible to distortion by time, emotion, ideology, and social expectations. Despite these flaws, memory is often surprisingly resilient and accurate. As Hoffman and Hoffman state 'unless fundamentally flawed, the brain systems responsible for memory, like those responsible for perception, are extraordinarily effective. Under the vast majority of circumstances, it is probable that information provided by memory, like that provided by most perceptions, is trustworthy'.<sup>49</sup> In my experience, narrators' recollections of events and emotions remained lucid but details such as dates were sometimes elusive or incorrect. Wherever possible I double-checked facts, but as I did not have access to contemporary diaries and journals I often could not confirm such information. Accordingly, this thesis focuses on narrators' use of memory and construction of their life story in the present, rather than the historical accuracy of their memories.

Many oral historians argue that a fundamental aim of oral history is to study how individuals construct their memories in the moment of telling. Oral historians see memory as a fluid process, responsive to changing conditions.<sup>50</sup> Many claim that memory's inaccuracies are actually useful. For example, Alastair Thomson's work on Australian Anzacs specifically focuses on how memory alters over time in response to social expectations and changing life

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<sup>47</sup> Marigold Linton, "Transformations of Memory in Everyday Life," in *Memory Observed: Remembering in Natural Contexts*, ed. Ulric Neisser and Ira E. Hymen (San Francisco: Worth Publisher, 2000), 89–90.

<sup>48</sup> For a full discussion of memory's inaccuracies see Daniel L. Schacter, *The Seven Sins of Memory: How the Mind Forgets and Remembers* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001).

<sup>49</sup> Alice M. Hoffman and Howard S. Hoffman, "Memory Theory: Personal and Social," in *Thinking About Oral History: Theories and Applications*, ed. Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (Lanham, M.D.: Altamira Press, 2008), 40.

<sup>50</sup> Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 70.

experiences.<sup>51</sup> Other oral historians argue that memory provides key insights into individuals' personalities. Jacob Climo and Maria Cattell state that while memory may be incorrect with regards to factual truth it always correctly reveals personal truth. Narrators use memory to maintain their individuality and order past experiences into a coherent whole. According to Climo and Cattell, autobiographical memories contain 'an abundance of truth in regard to personality, self expression, personal identity, future planning, and other self oriented aspects of memory'.<sup>52</sup> Robert Archibald, a memory studies specialist, makes an even more extreme claim, arguing that while 'facts matter as crucial reference points, memory, with its evocation of emotion and empathy, is the only sure path to the past'.<sup>53</sup> Most oral historians agree that memory, even if not always useful in determining historical facts, always contains meaning.

Another key feature of oral history is its retrospective viewpoint. In interviews participants reflect on their past from the context of the present. This adds another potential cause of bias. For example, a changed dominant ideology might encourage narrators to give information they have previously hidden. Conversely it might cause the participant to censor attitudes and events which are no longer socially acceptable.<sup>54</sup> But once again, oral historians argue that there are inherent benefits in the fluidity of memory. Trevor Lummis believes the long time span of oral history allows the historian to consider the historical development of conditions, attitudes, and values.<sup>55</sup> Paul Thompson also argues that the insights of retrospection are by no means a disadvantage; narrators' reflections oblige historians to test their own opinions against those of their subjects.<sup>56</sup> Donald Ritchie agrees that narrators' re-evaluations of past decisions are not necessarily invalidating so long as interviewers account for the revision process.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Alistair Thomson, "Embattled Manhood: Gender, Memory and the Anzac Legend," in *Memory and History in Twentieth-Century Australia*, ed. Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell, "Introduction: Meaning in Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives* ed. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 16.

<sup>53</sup> Robert R. Archibald, "A Personal History of Memory," in *Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. Jacob J. Climo and Maria G. Cattell (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2002), 70.

<sup>54</sup> Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence* (London: Hutchinson Education, 1987), 122.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>56</sup> Paul Richard Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 172.

<sup>57</sup> Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; London: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 33.



Due to the limitations of my data I do not focus on the accuracy of, or changes over time in, narrators' memories. One reason for this is narrators' lack of records from the time of their migration. Unfortunately, very few Kiwi migrants I interviewed had kept diaries or saved copies of their letters. Locating such sources would have allowed me to compare their contemporary records with their oral histories.<sup>58</sup> The second reason for my approach is the difficulty in corroborating specific details. Portelli in his interviews with witnesses to the Fosse Ardeatine massacre in World War II identified misremembering by comparing different accounts of a single event.<sup>59</sup> However, my narrators' experiences are separated in time and space. While I consider the general validity of their stories I am unable to compare between transcripts to verify factual reliability.

Instead, this thesis analyses the meanings arising from narrators' use of retrospective autobiographical memories in their interviews. I investigate how long-term memory is used to create reflective migration stories. I identify different types of autobiographical memories within a life story: nostalgic, rehearsed, sensory, and vivid archival memories. Studying these memories reveals they are reinforced by memorabilia, photographs, and reminiscence. I also pay close attention to how narrators use hindsight and reflection to make sense of their memories at the time of telling. Analysis of narrators' memories and reflections clarifies how they composed their life histories.

### ***Narrative***

To further untangle how narrators construct their life stories I draw on narrative theory. Like memory, narrative is a complex field of study with many different approaches. The simple definition of narrative is the representation of an event or series of events. Theorists see narrative story telling as an attempt to organise our understanding of time, identify causes, and create a coherent orderly explanation of our lives.<sup>60</sup> Narrative researchers aim to expose how stories are constructed. They analyse motives, omissions, inclusions, contexts, and overarching themes in narrators' stories. Narrative theory often investigates how current

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<sup>58</sup> Example of this approach in Alistair Thomson, *Moving Stories: An Intimate History of Four Women across Two Countries* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2011).

<sup>59</sup> Alessandro Portelli, "The Massacre at the Fosse Ardeatine: History, Myth, Ritual and Symbol," in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, ed. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, *Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative* (London: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>60</sup> H. Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3, 13, 41.

ideologies are reflected in an individual's story however my focus of enquiry is individuals' use of narrative to explain their personal past.

This thesis specifically uses narrative theory relevant to life histories. According to narrative studies theorists, people make sense of their lives through their narratives. Humans restructure their life stories as time passes and integrate new events.<sup>61</sup> Analysis of life stories requires a focus on experience as well as facts. Life story narratives are often organised thematically rather than chronologically and include non-story material such as description and theorizing.<sup>62</sup> For example, narrators may make counterfactual reflections, or talk about regrets. Charlotte Linde's book, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence*, argues that in 'order to exist in the social world with a comfortable sense of being a good, socially proper, and stable person, an individual needs to have a coherent, and constantly revised life story'.<sup>63</sup> Linde believes narrators achieve a coherent life story by making the ordering and content of events evaluative. Life stories usually illustrate something about a narrator's character or worldview. Linde also argues that life stories must have extended 'reportability'. A life story's contents need to be unusual or fascinating in some way to the listener.<sup>64</sup> Narrators use reportable events to explain who they are today and construct a meaningful life story.

The concluding chapters of this thesis combine these concepts of retrospective reflection, narrative coherence, and reportability with the *Listening Guide* methodology. The *Listening Guide* is a close reading technique for narrative enquiry developed during the 1980s by feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan. The researcher reads an interview transcript repeatedly, each time looking for different topics. The *Listening Guide* aims to highlight key themes but also analyse the interview as a whole.<sup>65</sup> I modify this approach to reveal how narrators use autobiographical memories, causation, and counterfactual reflection to make sense of their life experiences and migration from the perspective of the present. I use the *Listening Guide*

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<sup>61</sup> Leonard Webster and Patricie Mertova, *Using Narrative Enquiry as a Research Method: An Introduction to Using Critical Event Analysis in Research on Learning and Teaching* (London, New York: Routledge, 2007), 2–3.

<sup>62</sup> Corrine Squire, "Experience-Centred and Cultural-Oriented Approaches to Narrative," in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Corrine Squire, Molly Andrews, and Maria Tamboukou (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 41.

<sup>63</sup> Charlotte Linde, *Life Stories: The Creation of Coherence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 12–13, 20–2.

<sup>65</sup> Natasha S. Mauthner and Andrea Doucet, "Reflections on a Voice-Centred Relational Method: Analysing Maternal and Domestic Voices," in *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research: Private Lives and Public Texts*, ed. Jane Ribbens and Rosalind Edwards (London: Sage, 1998), 120–23.

as a counter measure to the segmentation of narratives which occurs when using a large number of qualitative sources to illustrate analytical points.

## **Oral history methods**

There is a vast amount of methodological writing on oral history as a discipline. Because of its recent addition to the historical profession and negative reputation amongst some traditional historians, practitioners expend much effort defending, critiquing, exploring, and analysing the practice of oral history. Rather than summarize the development of oral history historiography, already amply covered in a number of excellent texts, this section takes a more focused approach.<sup>66</sup> I explain how specific writing and thinking by oral historians has influenced my research and analysis.

Oral historians almost always document their personal involvement in research as an acknowledgment that interviews do not arise unbidden from a narrator. Stories are solicited by an interviewer whose aims, biases, personality, and relationship to the narrator all influence the shape of the resulting oral history. The following section assesses the assumptions, practices, and biases which informed my oral history interviews with Kiwi migrants to Australia.

### ***Oral history's strengths***

Oral history is demanding but its benefits far outweigh its disadvantages. Valerie Yow's working definition of oral history as 'the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form', while accurate, makes the process sound deceptively straightforward.<sup>67</sup> All oral historians agree oral history is time-consuming and labour-intensive. For each individual interview a researcher must identify the potential interviewee, arrange an interview with them, record the interview, gain the interviewee's consent to use the interview, write an account of their own personal experience of the interview, download the recording, transcribe or abstract the interview, write a thank you card, and send the transcript back to the

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<sup>66</sup> Best overall guides: Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2005); Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*; Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless, eds., *Thinking About Oral History: Theories and Applications* (Lanham, M.D.: Altamira Press, 2008). Donald Ritchie, *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011)

<sup>67</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 3.

interviewee for checking. Unsurprisingly, many historians judge oral history to be not worth the effort required. Dead people's documents are much simpler and don't answer back!

Oral history, however, has the great compensation of allowing historians access to previously untapped historical data. The discipline gained traction in the 1960s as a way of gathering information from groups who were absent from traditional histories: ethnic minorities, migrants, women, the elderly, homosexuals, and the working classes. Paul Thompson, a founding figure in English oral history circles, argues that oral historians are able to choose whom to interview, thereby allowing a multiplicity of viewpoints to be recreated in a cooperative, democratic, and interactive manner.<sup>68</sup> Given their focus on minority groups, naturally many early oral historians' work was motivated by dreams of social justice and political reform.

Oral history also allows a glimpse into the private lives of ordinary people. The personal perceptions of individuals reveal not only what happened to people in the past but also the thoughts and feelings they recall having at that time.<sup>69</sup> Alessandro Portelli, the influential Italian oral historian, argues that connecting the memories of individuals' personal experiences with 'history' is the 'task and theme of oral history'. Oral history is the point of encounter between the personal and the public.<sup>70</sup>

I chose oral history as the method for my investigation into Kiwis' migration to Australia for a number of reasons. Firstly, in spite of its time consuming nature, I knew from previous experience that oral history interviews are rewarding. I have always been attracted to the personal, emotional, and social aspects of history. This means that hearing people's life stories is (usually) a great privilege and pleasure. Secondly, oral history was necessary because few primary sources detailing New Zealanders' personal experiences of migration between New Zealand and Australia exist. Alistair Thomson points out that diarists often begin writing because they believe they are participating in a historically significant event.<sup>71</sup> I failed to find any significant diaries, letters, or autobiographies dealing with trans-Tasman

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<sup>68</sup> Paul Thompson, "The Voice of the Past: Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 28.

<sup>69</sup> Ministry for Culture and Heritage, "A Guide to Recording Oral History,"

<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history> (accessed 5 February 2009).

<sup>70</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), viii–ix.

<sup>71</sup> Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Stories: Using Personal Testimony in War History," *War & Society* 25, no. 2 (2006): 9.

migration in the 1960s to 1990s. The lack of primary documents is undoubtedly due to the recent and commonplace nature of the movement, as well as the growth of digital forms of communication. Even when individuals had written letters or kept diaries, these were discarded because of their perceived unimportance. Thirdly, the idea of creating new archival historical sources that could be accessed by other researchers was attractive. Although I had no overt political motivation for this project it was important to me my work should benefit others. I hoped to create a meaningful life review experience for participants, draw attention to a largely unexamined group of migrants in Australia, and create a useful body of archived interviews available for future family historians and academics.

### ***Selection of participants***

Selecting narrators for oral history interviews is constrained by participants' self-selection. A sparse or biased response immediately limits the number of potential interviewees. I was initially unsure about how many, and what type of, people would respond to my calls for involvement in the project. I was pleasantly surprised to find that through advertising in Australian and New Zealand local newspapers, a Radio New Zealand interview, notices in Kiwi expat websites, posters in libraries, and word of mouth I received hundreds of emails from New Zealanders who had migrated to Australia during the required time period. After email correspondence I received 275 completed questionnaires on migration. 229 questionnaires were accompanied by a longer written account of respondents' life and migration stories. Although there were some omissions in my sample group (migrants who moved to escape the law or were imprisoned in Australia), these surveys gave me a broad base from which to select interviewees as well as providing supplementary data.

Because of oral history's time consuming nature, the number of interviews recorded is limited by available time and money. Some well-funded or long-term oral history projects interview hundreds of participants. For the majority of lone researchers with deadlines, 10 to 40 interviews is a more realistic goal.<sup>72</sup> My project on New Zealand migrants to Australia was affected by the limit of three years for which I had a PhD scholarship. Fortunately I

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<sup>72</sup> An example of a larger study, funded to employ a team of researchers, is a project on post war English migrants to Australia. This study was based on an archive of over 150 interviews as well as thousands of written life accounts. Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*. By comparison a single-authored study on post war English migrants to New Zealand was based on 15 interviews and 288 questionnaires. Megan Hutching, *Long Journey for Sevenpence: An Oral History of Assisted Immigration to New Zealand from the United Kingdom, 1947–1975* (Wellington: Victoria University Press in association with Historical Branch Department of Internal Affairs, 1999).

received funding which enabled me to visit five major centres in Australia in order to record interviews: Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Perth, and Brisbane. I also did interviews in Wellington, Auckland, and Christchurch. In addition to the 275 surveys and 229 written narratives I received, this thesis is largely relies on the 35 oral history interviews (including a joint interview with a husband and wife) I recorded in 2009–2010.

The main concern with selecting narrators is how to choose whom to interview. Claiming that an individual experience is representative of a larger cohort is difficult, especially as there is usually variation between different life histories. As many oral historians rightly argue, if oral evidence aspires to be anything more than biography then it must proceed from individual to social experience. Personal memories and narratives need to link together with the broader patterns of history.<sup>73</sup> One answer to this issue, employed effectively by Paul Thompson in his groundbreaking oral history project *Edwardians*, is using a sample frame to find informants who are a representative cross-section of society. According to the needs of the project, criteria can be set to recruit participants of a specific occupation, sex, ethnicity, social class, or experience.<sup>74</sup> While I did not interview hundreds of people as Thompson did, in my selection of participants I attempted to achieve a broad coverage of ethnicity, gender, age, experience, time of migration, educational background, relationship status, and geographic location. I was also able to use the written narratives as supplementary evidence. I detail the relationship between my sample to the overall demography of New Zealand migrants to and from Australia in Chapter Two.

## The interview

Oral historians recommend a preliminary meeting where the interviewer explains the project, describes how the interview will operate, and generally makes friendly small talk.<sup>75</sup> Many oral historians doing in-depth life story interviews also do follow-up interviews in order to continue gathering information and avoid taxing the narrator.<sup>76</sup> I was unable to undertake either of these practices due to my limited time in Australian and New Zealand locations.

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<sup>73</sup> Anna Green, "Oral History," in *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, ed. Anna Green and Megan Hutching (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), 3; Trevor Lummis, "Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 255; Alessandro Portelli, "Oral History as Genre," in *Narrative and Genre*, ed. Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson (London ; New York: Routledge, 1998), 25–6.

<sup>74</sup> Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 148.

<sup>75</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 93.

<sup>76</sup> Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 40.

Instead I emailed participants to explain the purpose of the project and what would be expected. Copies of the project's Information Sheet and the email I sent narrators concerning the interview can be found in Appendix A. In addition, further email or phone exchanges confirmed the interview date, travel arrangements, and meeting points. Although I did not conduct follow up interviews, I left a whole day free for each interview to allow the narrator and I to take breaks, eat, and chat in between each section of the recording.

Oral history interviewers always aim for high quality sound recordings. For decades oral historians recorded onto analogue tapes but in recent years digital recording has come to the fore.<sup>77</sup> I used a digital recorder for my interviews as it offers great flexibility and potential. In choosing my equipment I abided by the New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage's *Guide to Recording Oral History*.<sup>78</sup> For all interviews I used a Fostex FR-2LE Field Memory Recorder with two external lapel microphones and wore headphones so as to be able to monitor sound levels. I recorded at 48 kHz, 24 bit, which is of higher quality than CD recordings. Although I aimed to record in a quiet room many of the interviews were occasionally punctuated by unexpected interruptions: phones or doorbells ringing, clocks chiming, dogs barking, cats purring on my lap, trucks rumbling by, and raucous Australian birds outside the window. Ultimately my narrators' comfort was more important to me than a silent setting. So for example, one interview was conducted on a back porch, allowing the narrator to smoke and both of us to relax in the Australian sunshine.

The art of questioning is vital to the oral history interview. Indeed, most detailed oral history methodology guides devote pages to questioning techniques.<sup>79</sup> Prior to the interview I sent participants a copy of the questions but asked them not to prepare anything. A copy of these questions can be found in Appendix B. Although my interview questions were focused on the migration experience I situated these within a life history approach. This was important to provide a context for their story as well as to create a fuller record for future researchers.<sup>80</sup> Each interview began with my stating the interview details, after which I asked the narrator specific questions about their name, date of birth, and parents. The interview would then

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<sup>77</sup> Even in Yow's 2005 guide to recording oral history, the emphasis is on using tape recordings.

<sup>78</sup> Ministry for Culture and Heritage, "Equipment – a Guide to Recording Oral History," <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/equipment-a-guide-to-recording-oral-history> (accessed 5 February 2009).

<sup>79</sup> For example Beth M. Robertson, *Oral History Handbook*, 5th ed. (South Australia: Oral History Association of Australia, 2006), 64–72.

<sup>80</sup> I found ideas for life history questions in Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 310–23.

move on in a chronological order through their childhood, youth, and adulthood. This allowed narrators to warm up to the interviewing process and often led naturally to their migration story. During interviews I asked open ended questions in a natural way and clarified any questions which confused narrators. Alessandro Portelli claims there is a place for challenging, even respectfully antagonistic, questioning to induce narrators to open up.<sup>81</sup> I avoided this approach as I never felt in a position to challenge narrators' personal stories. Donald Ritchie, an American oral historian, states that an interviewer should always be ready to abandon prepared questions and instead follow unexpected paths.<sup>82</sup> When I felt the narrator left gaps, avoided a topic, or introduced a new train of thought I asked questions to clarify details or elicit more information. Often the narrator and I would venture into topics, which although not directly relevant to migration, were an important part of their personal story. In accordance with Michael Frisch's view of oral history as a joint endeavour authored by both the interviewer and narrator I was open to interviews developing their own unique form rather than following a set pattern.<sup>83</sup>

Effective questioning during an interview relies on the equally essential art of listening. Close and total attention to the narrator's story is necessary to pick up on underlying themes that require follow up or clarification. Furthermore, one needs to show the narrator that you are listening by providing appropriate responses. Valerie Yow, an experienced American oral historian, advises interviewers to be animated during an interview; nodding and smiling, but also to control their body language to avoid showing judgment.<sup>84</sup> One of the first skills I had to master was to show interest by facial expression and movement instead of audible affirmation. I did laugh with narrators when they told jokes or made humorous comments as I felt staying silent would dishearten them. I also learnt to wait during pauses. Especially with more difficult questions, people needed time to frame a reply. Above all I tried through my listening and subsequent questioning to show empathy and genuine interest.

### ***Interviewer - narrator relationships***

Over the last few decades, oral history methodology has undergone a conceptual shift, concomitant with a wider trend in the social sciences, which acknowledges the interviewer's

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<sup>81</sup> Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 12.

<sup>82</sup> Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*.

<sup>83</sup> Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York, 1990), xx–xi.

<sup>84</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 101.



contributions to, and influence on, their research. Interviewers are encouraged to consider their assumptions, motives, and role in shaping the interview so they can be aware of the subjective aspects of their research. Valerie Yow, a leading author on this theme of interpersonal relations in oral history, encourages interviewers to be aware of the power relationship in an interview, affected by age, class, status, ethnicity, gender, and knowledge.<sup>85</sup> An example of this approach is found in Arthur A. Hansen's article on his interviews with Nikkei, Americans of Japanese ancestry, where he reflects on the necessity of being sensitive to the influence of stereotypes on the interviewer-narrator relationship.<sup>86</sup> Most oral historians think of the interview as a collaborative process, negotiated between the narrator and interviewer.<sup>87</sup> Alessandro Portelli in his book, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*, makes several important suggestions on the narrator-interviewer relationship. He points out narrators bring their own agenda to the interview: by listening to 'irrelevant personal matters' the interviewer learns much about the narrator. Portelli also encourages the interviewer to open up to the narrator: 'one cannot expect informants to tell the truth about themselves if we start out by deceiving them about ourselves'.<sup>88</sup> Although, as Portelli points out, too much self reflexivity can be a hindrance, I will now briefly reflect on the relationships between myself and the various narrators I worked alongside.<sup>89</sup>

Generalising across all 35 interviews is difficult because each one had its own context and relationship dynamic. I am a Pākehā New Zealand female in my mid twenties. Many narrators (all except one were older than me) commented on how much younger I looked than they expected. Some participants, especially the men, showed a sense of protectiveness. They dropped me home after the interview as they felt it was unsafe for me to make my own way back. My youth went some way towards shifting the power balance in the narrators' favour; although I was the one with the questions, they had the advantage of life experience. Because I was a New Zealander, this gave me a kind of kinship with the narrators, who were all New Zealanders. Australian-based narrators often asked me questions about New Zealand

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<sup>85</sup> Valerie Yow, "'Do I Like Them Too Much?' Effects of Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 55, 63; Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 157.

<sup>86</sup> Arthur A. Hansen, "A Riot of Voices: Racial and Ethnic Variables in Interactive Oral History Interviewing," in *Interactive Oral History Interviewing*, ed. Eva M. McMahon and Kim Lacy Rogers (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1994), 136.

<sup>87</sup> An early example of this approach can be found in Frisch, *A Shared Authority*.

<sup>88</sup> Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*.

<sup>89</sup> Portelli rightly cautions that too much self reflexivity can erase the narrator from discourse and signal the weakness between our intellectual endeavour and the outside world. *Ibid.*, xiv.

current affairs or established a connection based on shared experiences. I interviewed quite a few Māori narrators, and although I was unaware of any difficulty in these interviews I am sure there were instances where our different cultural heritage influenced the interview. I sometimes felt as if Māori narrators were unsure of my ability to understand references to their spirituality and culture. Some Māori narrators were fluent in Te Reo and I am not: this probably limited these narrators' expressiveness. It would be naïve of me to ignore gender dynamics. With women I was unaware of any tension. But I was childless, and at the time of the interviews unmarried, whereas most of the female narrators had life partners and families. Perhaps women would have talked about their relationships more explicitly if I had shared these life experiences. With male interviewees I was more aware of a gender dynamic. Men often apologised for swearing and several of the older men made comments to the tune of a 'pretty young thing like you.' I have no doubt that those with rough and ready tales talked less candidly about their experiences than they would have done with a male interviewer. At the same time, I was surprised at the number of men willing to be honest about their emotions with me. I must admit I usually had the closest rapport with university educated narrators because they generally were more similar to me, did jobs I found more interesting, and showed a strong interest in my thesis.

My relationship with narrators was also influenced by our interaction before and during interviews. Often people picked me up from the nearest train station and we would chat for some time before starting the interview. Although in the recorded interview the focus stayed on the narrator, before and after many asked me personal questions. What did I want to do when I finished the PhD? What did I think of Australia? Would I ever move to Australia? Particularly when narrators had shared personal emotional stories I felt a need to reciprocate their honesty. Often I would end up sharing defining aspects of my personal story: the death of my mother from cancer, my close relationship with my two sisters, that I had a boyfriend, my study of history, and future plans. This reciprocity encouraged narrators to open up about their own more private experiences and provided a sense of connection. After interviews narrators often invited me to stay for a meal or hot drink.

### ***Transcription and editing***

Transcription, the act of translating spoken words into type, seems a simple enough task but in fact is one of the most challenging aspects of oral historians' work. The first difficulty is

purely physical. A verbatim transcript will entail about six to eight hours work for each hour of recorded material.<sup>90</sup> This process is time-consuming and hard on the wrists. Although many oral historians pay others to transcribe their interviews, I transcribed all 35 interviews in full myself. This was partly an economic decision – as a full time student I had more spare time than cash – but also a methodological choice. Transcribing allowed me to listen to narrators’ stories deeply, several times over. Immersing myself in the data led to new insights and allowed me to punctuate the transcripts exactly as I wished.

The second difficulty with transcription is deciding how transcripts should be edited. Oral historians’ approaches to editing vary considerably. For example, Portelli sees transcribing and editing as a creative task, in which accuracy of meaning is more important than a faithful repetition of the narrator’s words. For example, Portelli may format a narrative as an epic poem in order to highlight the sound quality of the performance.<sup>91</sup> Megan Hutching, a New Zealand oral historian also argues that leaving narrators’ words in an unedited form does them a disservice. A ‘faithful’ transcription denies narrators the privilege of editing and is less accessible for a reader.<sup>92</sup> By contrast Yow cautions against prettifying a transcript too much for publication. She believes excessive editing makes a narrative sound false. Yow also cautions that changing a narrator’s words smacks of power abuse. She prefers to stay as close to the narrator’s words while still retaining a readable text.<sup>93</sup>

My approach was to transliterate directly for my first copy of the transcript. I did occasionally omit the ‘ums’ and ‘you knows’ which peppered some narratives but for the most part I followed the transcription guidelines set out by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage:

Transcribe what you hear. Do not put words or phrases into the interviewee's mouth, even if what they say is awkward or ungrammatical. Do not change word order... Punctuate so that the transcript makes sense of the words as they were spoken. Be consistent in your punctuation... Put in full stops at what seem to be natural sentence breaks. Transcripts with little punctuation are very difficult to read, let alone understand. Make a new paragraph when the subject of discussion changes, to avoid long unbroken passages.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ministry for Culture and Heritage, “Processing the Interview – a Guide to Recording Oral History,” <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/processing-the-interview-a-guide-to-recording-oral-history>. (accessed 9 February 2009).

<sup>91</sup> Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 15, 22.

<sup>92</sup> Megan Hutching, “The Distance between Voice and Transcript,” in *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, ed. Anna Green and Megan Hutching (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), 170, 172–3.

<sup>93</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 326–7.

<sup>94</sup> Ministry for Culture and Heritage, “Processing the Interview.”

I then sent the transcript to the narrators, asking them to make changes, correct dates, or signal parts of their story which they did not want published. I requested narrators make as few changes as possible to the actual transcript. A copy of the letter I sent the narrators accompanying the transcript can be found in Appendix A. Most narrators made few changes although many commented that they were horrified to see how ungrammatically they spoke. I always reassured them that this was normal and part of what makes oral history unique.

When editing quotations for publication in the thesis I keep narrators' words as close as possible to the original transcript, while aiming for ease of comprehension for the reader. I make the narrators' accounts as readable as possible, mainly through the careful use of punctuation. I tend to use short sentences instead of long rambling run on sentences as I find these more punchy and readable. I delete false starts to sentences, repetition, and needless linkages (such as 'and') when no meaning is lost by their absence. I sometimes change tenses at a narrator's request or for clarity's sake. Editorial deletions (usually of only a few words) are denoted by three ellipses ... and explanatory editorial insertions by square brackets [ ]. Quotations from oral history interviews are italicised, while quotations from written narratives are not. I stay closer to Yow's approach rather than Portelli or Hutching's more editorial method. For me, part of the value of oral history is its difference from written sources. Although the narrator's words may not be always grammatically correct, they are an accurate reflection of how we all speak and tell stories. My own questions, which I include in the thesis where necessary, are certainly not always elegantly phrased. Moreover I hope that by retaining narrators' own words their individual personalities and storytelling methods will shine through.

### ***Ethics***

Oral historians have an ethical duty to their narrators. Their first responsibility is to regulate access to the recording and information gathered. Where will it be held? Who will access it? What control will the narrator or interviewer have over it in publication? Oral historians ask narrators to sign consent forms which allow them to analyze, publish, and archive interviews. The second aspect of ethical behaviour concerns the interviewer's relationship with the narrator. This includes every aspect of how the interviewer relates to the narrator before, during, and after the interview. The third ethical issue – and the most problematic – concerns the researcher's interpretation of the oral history interviews.

It was necessary for me to gain clearance from the University of Canterbury Ethics Committee before I began this thesis. I provided the committee with the initial survey, information sheet, and consent forms for the survey and oral history interviews. The aim of these sheets was to provide participants with a clear understanding of the project and to enable them to regulate the use of their interviews. A copy of the survey, information sheets, and consent forms can be found in Appendix A. As mentioned previously, I also gave narrators an opportunity to revise their transcripts. In several cases individuals did not want certain sections of their interview published or archived and I have abided by their wishes. I also use pseudonyms where requested.

The second aspect of ethical behaviour, the interviewer's treatment of narrators, is summed up by Portelli as 'respect for the value and importance of every individual'.<sup>95</sup> I listened closely to each story on its own terms, tried to avoid judgement, and showed the narrator appreciation for sharing their story. Afterwards I sent narrators a handwritten thank you card along with a copy of their interview on CD. In many cases contact with my various interviewees continued. For example, after the 2010 Christchurch earthquake I received a steady trickle of emails from people I had talked to in Australia, enquiring about the wellbeing of me and my family. Valerie Yow points out that the role of the researcher in some way inhibits friendships. Furthermore sustaining sustain friendships with all your interviewees is impossible. Yow advises being appreciative but also giving closure to the interview process.<sup>96</sup> I did not form close friendships with narrators, but I always try to reply to their kind emails. I also emailed participants with newsletter updates on the progress of my thesis at regular intervals. In oral history it is vital to never forget that your sources are individuals with feelings; not inanimate documents.

Ethical issues are least obvious and yet most important in the analysis and interpretation of the interviews. Consent forms are no guarantee of protection for the narrator. Instead, they protect the interviewer if a narrator claims they are misrepresented.<sup>97</sup> Although the researcher must watch out for their narrators' wellbeing they also have an ethical duty to aim for truth and meaning. Portelli sums up this balancing act best:

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<sup>95</sup> Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 58.

<sup>96</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 163–5.

<sup>97</sup> Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 55–6.

Ethical and legal guidelines only make sense if they are the outward manifestation of a broader and deeper sense of personal and political commitment to honesty and truth. In the context of oral history, by commitment to honesty I mean personal respect for the people we work with and intellectual respect for the material we receive. By commitment to truth, I mean a utopian striving and urge to know 'how things really are' balanced by an opening to the many variants of 'how things may be'.<sup>98</sup>

I follow Portelli's approach in this thesis, aiming to combine a respect for my narrators' stories with a search for themes and patterns which expand our understanding of what migration was really like for New Zealanders moving to Australia.

In my analysis of data I use a combination of broad thematic analysis and close reading. After the transcription process I entered all written and transcribed narratives into a qualitative analysis computer program called NVIVO. This program allowed me to read through each narrative and highlight all the different migration themes. When I was writing I was able to pull up all the quotations on each theme instantly which helped me make wider generalisations about migrants' experiences. But individual stories also illuminate historical themes effectively.<sup>99</sup> Accordingly I have also included more detailed stories of a few individual narrators' lives throughout the thesis. Chapter Eleven in particular focuses on a close reading of several narrators' interviews. I have tried at all times to respect narrators' stories but inevitably some may disagree with my interpretations of their lives; for this I take full responsibility.

Before moving on to a more detailed investigation of narrators' migration experiences to Australia, it is necessary to situate their stories within the wider context. The following chapter outlines the development of New Zealand migration to Australia and illustrates the representativeness of my participants.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>99</sup> Thomson, *Moving Stories: An Intimate History of Four Women across Two Countries*, 183.

## Chapter Two: Trans-Tasman Migration

This chapter outlines the history of New Zealand migration to Australia as well as summarising key demographic findings on Kiwi migrants who moved to Australia from the late 1960s to early 1990s. This section also includes statistical analysis of how my participants fit into this wider context. Although the 275 migrants who contributed surveys and written narratives were not a random sample, they were a large enough group to be considered representative. I have also demonstrated how my interview sample of 35 were also generally representative of the wider experience.<sup>1</sup>

### New Zealand migration to Australia in a global context

New Zealanders' migration to Australia is part of a larger pattern of out-migration. Alan Gamlen, who studies the New Zealand 'diaspora', identifies 1973 when Britain withdrew from the Commonwealth as a key turning point.<sup>2</sup> Prior to 1973, New Zealand was perceived as a major settlement destination for European migrants.<sup>3</sup> But after 1973 New Zealand emigration steadily increased. Between 1979 and 2006 there was an average annual net emigration of 20,578 New Zealand citizens.<sup>4</sup> Gamlen points out that the steady trickle of returning New Zealand citizens 'has not offset the larger, more erratic surges of New Zealand-citizen emigration'.<sup>5</sup> New Zealand emigrants tended to be tertiary educated, young 'rite of passage migrants' moving to 'Anglo-world' countries.<sup>6</sup>

Although the rise in New Zealand migration to Australia from the late 1960s onwards is part of a general increase in emigration, the trans-Tasman migration corridor has its own unique patterns. Migration from New Zealand to Australia is part of a long-standing historical trend, dating back to the nineteenth century. Migration to Australia increased before 1973 and fluctuated according to the relative economic situation between both nations. Emigration to Australia requires little preparation or savings. Accordingly, many Kiwis moved to Australia on short notice and were able to settle without applying for permanent residence or

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<sup>1</sup> Not all of my participants filled in all the survey fields, thus in some categories the number of responses is less than 275 or 35. I also interviewed 36 people but one of the narrators only decided to participate on the day (in a joint interview with husband and wife) and thus did not fill out a survey. Thus the statistical analysis in this chapter is generally based on 35 narrators' surveys.

<sup>2</sup> Gamlen, "Creating and Destroying Diaspora Strategies," 10.

<sup>3</sup> Castles and Miller, *The Age of Migration*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Gamlen, "Making Hay While the Sun Shines: Envisioning New Zealand's State-Diaspora Relations," *Policy Quarterly* 3(2007): 12.

<sup>5</sup> Gamlen, "Creating and Destroying Diaspora Strategies," 10.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

citizenship. Because moving to Australia was affordable and convenient, New Zealand migrants to Australia came from a much broader cross-section of New Zealand society than the typical 'rite of passage' Kiwi migrant. The geographical closeness of the two nations meant that visits home, return migration, and circular movements were easily achievable and frequent. The following chapter explores trans-Tasman migration in more detail and integrates the research participants into these broader findings.

## **A brief history of trans-Tasman migration policy**

The history of trans-Tasman migration policy is marked by freedom of movement across the Tasman. This unrestricted migration began amongst the Australasian British colonies. After New Zealand separated from New South Wales to become a separate colony in 1841, trans-Tasman migration increasingly operated independently of the United Kingdom's immigration market. Up until 1876 immigration was managed by New Zealand provincial governments and the Australian colonies.<sup>7</sup> White citizens of Australia and New Zealand were allowed to travel freely across the Tasman. Since Australian Federation in 1901, indigenous peoples from Australia and New Zealand were supposedly treated as 'British subjects' and allowed to move freely between the two nations. But Māori were not always admitted to Australia. James Bennett highlights a case in 1905 where two Māori shearers were not allowed to enter Sydney after a bungled dictation test. In response to the New Zealand government's protests, Australian Prime Minister George Reid instructed that Māori were always to be admitted to Australia.<sup>8</sup> While not indicated in New Zealand's legislation, administrative discretion was also exercised in favour of Australian Aborigines visiting New Zealand. But both New Zealand and Australia implemented legislation which restricted naturalised Pacific Islanders' and Asians' moves across the Tasman. An outcome of the White Australia and White New Zealand policies, these restrictions endured until the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>9</sup> During World War I, travel restrictions were imposed between New Zealand and Australia for security reasons. The first legislation introduced in the 1920s did away with wartime controls and allowed natural-born British subjects unrestricted, undocumented freedom of travel between Australia

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<sup>7</sup> W. D. Borrie, "The Peopling of Australia, 1788–1988: The Common Heritage," in *Tasman Relations: New Zealand and Australia, 1788–1988*, ed. Keith Sinclair (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1987), 203.

<sup>8</sup> James Bennett, "Māori as Honorary Members of the White Tribe," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29, no. 3 (2001): 41.

<sup>9</sup> Alan Burnett and Robin Burnett, *The Australia and New Zealand Nexus* (Canberra: Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1978), 18–23.



and New Zealand. This policy remained virtually unchanged until 1973 and was suspended only during World War II when all travellers were required to hold travel documents.<sup>10</sup>

In 1973 the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA) officially confirmed that formal documentation was unnecessary for Australian or New Zealand citizens migrating across the Tasman. Tran-Tasman migrants had the same rights as permanent residents in both nations. In 1981 the Australian government insisted on passports for all travellers to Australia, including those from New Zealand. This was a response to Australian concerns that back door migrants, criminals, and terrorists might enter Australia via New Zealand.<sup>11</sup> Robert Muldoon's National government rejected similar measures, but in 1987 New Zealand followed suit, requiring all arrivals to hold passports.<sup>12</sup> Australia introduced a special category visa for New Zealand migrants in the 1990s but the TTTA continued as before so most New Zealanders were unaware of any change in policy. In 2001, the two nations made a change to their social security agreement due to Australia's concerns about supporting unemployed New Zealand migrants.<sup>13</sup> The new policies introduced unilaterally by Australia removed New Zealand migrants' rights to unemployment benefits or citizenship unless they first became permanent residents under the same criteria used for other migrants. New Zealanders retained access to non-labour market based benefits such as Medicare, rent assistance, and family allowances and tax-credits, as well as public housing and education services. The policy changes led to initial decreased migration flows and reduced the proportion of 'backdoor' migrants, but ultimately made little long-term difference to migration trends.<sup>14</sup>

## **A demographic overview of New Zealand migration to Australia**

Demographers generally use arrival and departure cards from Australia and New Zealand to calculate statistical trends about New Zealand migration to Australia. These sources are not without their problems. There were differences between the New Zealand and Australian

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<sup>10</sup> Mein Smith, Hempenstall, and Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World*, 62.

<sup>11</sup> 'Back door' migrants are foreign-born New Zealand citizens (usually from Asia or the Pacific) who use their New Zealand citizenship to move to Australia, thus avoiding Australia's immigration criteria and quotas.

<sup>12</sup> Gordon A. Carmichael, Stephen Buetow, and Ruth Farmer, "Policy and Data," in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service. (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), 5–8.

<sup>13</sup> Mein Smith, Hempenstall, and Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World*, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Poot and Sanderson, *Changes in Social Security Eligibility*, 1–4; Australian Federated Press, "New Zealand Migration to Australia Hits Record," 21 June 2011.

estimates of permanent and long-term (PLT) flows until recently because of discrepancies in card design. Only in 1988–89 did New Zealand and Australian data converge.<sup>15</sup> New Zealand's data on PLT movement was also contaminated by the double counting of migrants who returned briefly to New Zealand within a year of emigrating to Australia, and on returning to Australia were counted a second time.<sup>16</sup> The second major problem with the data is human error. Arrival and departure cards filled out in stressful, busy, and cramped surroundings may be incomplete or incorrect. More significantly, because formal permission is not needed by New Zealand citizens for settlement in Australia, short-term visitors can easily change their minds and become PLT settlers and vice versa. This problem is called category jumping.<sup>17</sup> In spite of these drawbacks, these sources provide data that is vital to understanding the wider patterns of trans-Tasman migration. Indicators such as age, ethnicity, gender, relationship status, job, education, geographical location, and mobility help demographers make sense of what type of New Zealanders migrated to Australia, where they settled, and their further movements within Australia and internationally. Demographers also use censuses and surveys to track the situation of migrants after their initial move.

The following summary of demographic findings on New Zealand migration to and from Australia mainly uses research which addresses the period covered in this thesis; the late 1960s through to the early 1990s. The key source used is *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, which specifically focuses on trends during the 1970s and 1980s. I have also used some newer demographic articles which rely on data from the mid-1990s onwards.

### ***Migration patterns***

Freedom of movement between New Zealand and Australia has allowed migrants to move based on their personal aspirations. Often migrants' motivations are partially economic. Historically, migrants moved through the trans-Tasman migration corridor following economic booms or fleeing depressions in Australia or New Zealand. As pointed out previously, economic asymmetries create the greatest incentive for migration. Gold rushes in Otago and Westland in New Zealand in the 1860s attracted a major influx of Australian

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<sup>15</sup> Carmichael, Buetow, and Farmer, "Policy and Data," 21–2.

<sup>16</sup> Gordon A. Carmichael, *Trans-Tasman Migration: A Post-War Overview with Emphasis on the 1980s*, Working Papers in Demography (Canberra: Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1994), 2–3.

<sup>17</sup> Carmichael, Buetow, and Farmer, "Policy and Data," 17–18.

migrants. But New Zealand's deteriorating economic conditions in the 1880s reversed the flow. Then from 1892 to 1909 the tide of migration turned once again as the New Zealand economy boomed due to refrigerated exports.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, during the 1890s, Australia was a significant source of migrants for New Zealand; over twice as many arrivals had spent time in Australia rather than coming directly from Britain or Ireland.<sup>19</sup> Rollo Arnold deduced that many incoming men were returning to resume responsibilities they had deserted during the New Zealand depression of the 1880s.<sup>20</sup> Throughout the 1920s, Great Depression, and World War II, Australia was the net beneficiary of migration but to a much lesser extent than previously as both nations were experiencing similar conditions. After World War II, from 1947–51, New Zealand had a small net loss of 3000 to Australia. But in the next 16 years New Zealand resumed the role of net gainer in trans-Tasman movements. New Zealand gained 36 000 Australian migrants from 1952–1967 due to its stable economy and high standard of living.<sup>21</sup>

In 1967 the pattern of give and take in migration flows between New Zealand and Australia changed. From this point onwards far more New Zealanders migrated to Australia than vice versa. Demographers give several reasons for this trend. The first is New Zealand's weaker economy and Australia's relatively healthy economy throughout this period. In the late 1960s New Zealand faced its first major post-World War II recession. The New Zealand economy suffered from its highest unemployment rate since the 1930s, rapid inflation, and the first post-war devaluation of the New Zealand pound against the pound sterling.<sup>22</sup> Another factor for the growth in trans-Tasman migration was the replacement of sea travel with air travel after 1960. Although flights began as early as 1940, by the 1970s flights were affordable for a large percentage of the population. A third contributing factor was the emergent strong demographic trend of New Zealand baby boomers going on their 'OE' as young adults.<sup>23</sup>

During the late 1960s to early 1990s there were three peaks in New Zealand migration to Australia. From 1967–1971 an average of 21 000 New Zealanders made a permanent or long-

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<sup>18</sup> Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service., *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences* (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), xxi.

<sup>19</sup> Phillips and Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland*, 45.

<sup>20</sup> Arnold, "Some Australasian Aspects of New Zealand Life," 57.

<sup>21</sup> Borrie, "The Peopling of Australia," 207–8.

<sup>22</sup> J. Gould, *The Rake's Progress? The New Zealand Economy since 1945* (Auckland: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 118.

<sup>23</sup> Jacques Poot, "Trans-Tasman Migration, Transnationalism and Economic Development," 3.

term move to Australia each year. The second major wave of New Zealand migration to Australia was from 1978–79 through to 1980–81. During this period an average of 32 000 New Zealanders moved to Australia per year. In the early 1980s this fell by a third as Australia experienced recession and unemployment. But as Australia's economic conditions improved, and New Zealand's worsened, migration to Australia regained momentum. The third major wave of migration peaked at over 44 000 in 1988–89. Late in the 1990s Australia experienced recession and permanent and long-term migration from New Zealand dropped again.<sup>24</sup> Towards the end of the first decade of the 2000s, migration from New Zealand to Australia has once again peaked. The modern period of trans-Tasman migration is distinguished by sizeable, sustained population loss from New Zealand to Australia.

Recent trans-Tasman migration patterns are cyclical, circular, and increasingly permanent. Jacques Poot notes that, 'the cycle has been remarkably regular since the 1960s, with peak net outflows to Australia being recorded toward the end of every decade (1969, 1979, 1989, 2008), with only the late 1990s net outflow not peaking until early in the new millennium'. Poot and his colleague, Richard Bedford point out that this decadal cycle did not occur before the late 1960s and there is no scientific reason why it should continue.<sup>25</sup> The cycle of departures also generates some cyclicity in arrivals from Australia (of which two thirds are returning New Zealanders).<sup>26</sup> The sheer growth of numbers of New Zealanders in Australia means that New Zealanders and their Australian family dominate the flow of migration from Australia to New Zealand.<sup>27</sup> Australian demographer Graeme Hugo points out that there is a high degree of circularity in trans-Tasman migration, with many migrants moving between the two nations.<sup>28</sup> Demographers also note that emigration from New Zealand has seen a definite change in emphasis from long-term towards permanent movement. There has also been more category jumping by short-term visitors. These trends reveal that many New

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<sup>24</sup> Gordon A. Carmichael, "History of Trans-Tasman Population Movement" in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Richard Bedford and Jacques Poot, "Changing Tides in the South Pacific: Immigration to Aotearoa New Zealand," in *Immigration Worldwide: Policies, Practices and Trends*, ed. U. A. Segal, N. S. Mayadas, and D. Elliot (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

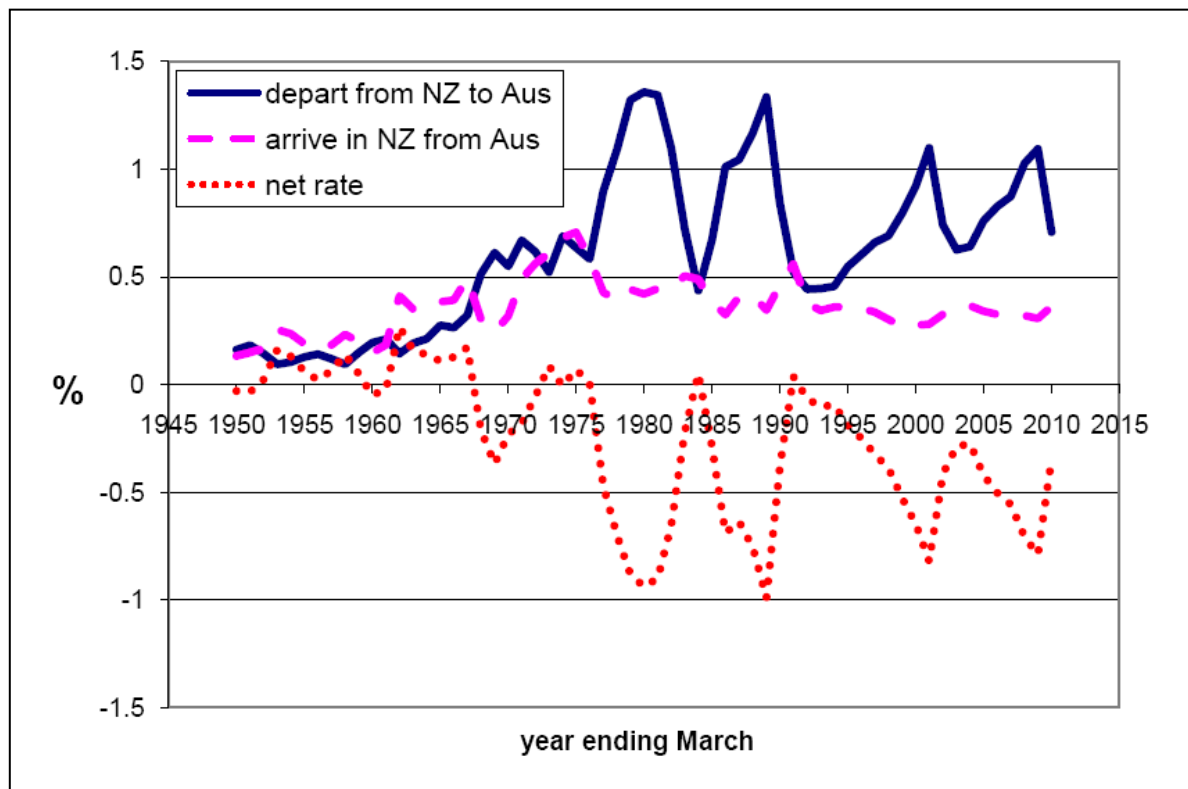
<sup>26</sup> Poot, "Trans-Tasman Migration, Transnationalism and Economic Development," 8.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon A. Carmichael, "Trans-Tasman Population Movement in the 1980s: Insights from the Australian Data" in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), 122.

<sup>28</sup> Hugo, "New Zealanders in Australia in 2001," 75.

Zealanders make permanent moves to Australia, but also that a sizeable number also eventually return to New Zealand.

The following graphs reveal the wider patterns of New Zealand migration to Australia as well as the spread of migration dates amongst this thesis's participants. Figure 1, courtesy of Jacques Poot, reveals overall migration trends in movement to Australia from 1947–2010. It clearly shows the cyclical peaks in migration. Figure 2 plots the date of migration amongst all 275 participants who filled in surveys. It reveals that my respondents' migration dates cover all years in the period and roughly mirror the three migration peaks in the late 1960s, late 1970s, and late 1980s. As such my participants are generally representative of overall trans-Tasman migration patterns.



**Figure 1. Permanent long term trans-Tasman migration as a percentage of the New Zealand population, 1950–2010. Courtesy of Jacques Poot.**

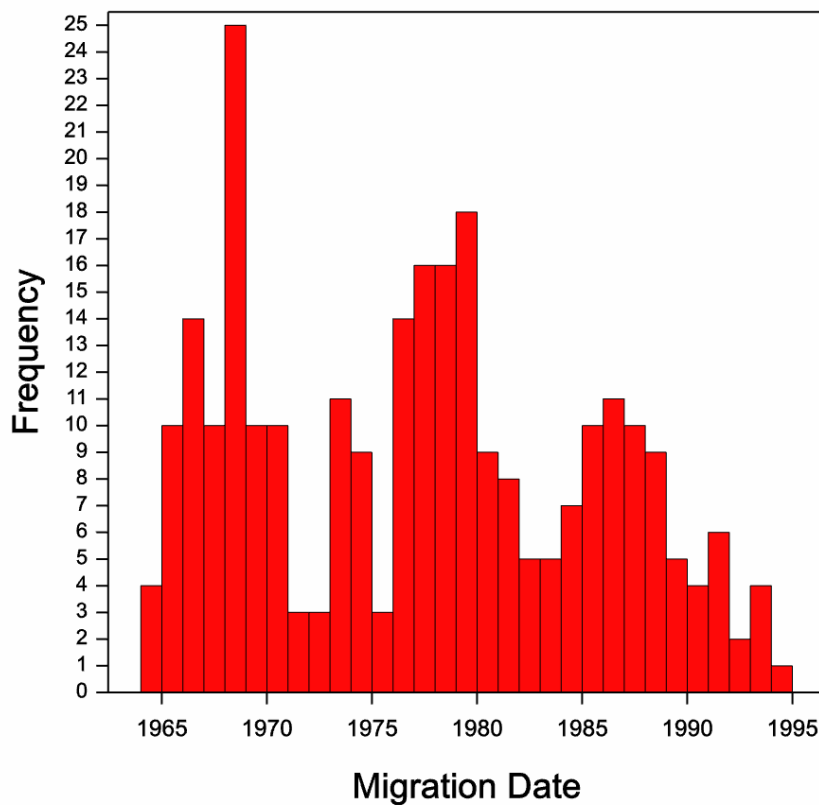


Figure 2. Date of migration to Australia amongst thesis survey participants.

## Sociodemographic characteristics of migrants

The following demographic information on New Zealand residents who migrated to Australia is mostly based on data from the 1980s, due to the superior reliability and analysis of statistics from this period. This data is relevant as it covers two of the migration peaks, 1979–81, and 1988–9 in my thesis timeframe.

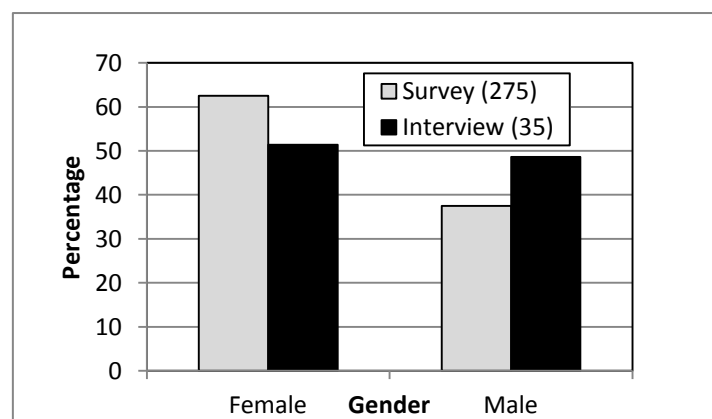
### *Age, gender, and relationship status*

New Zealand migration to Australia was dominated by young adults. Two thirds of New Zealand's net migration losses in the 1970s were in the 15–24 age group.<sup>29</sup> A sizable number of families also migrated. Families were more likely than young adults to indicate permanent rather than long-term migration intentions on their passenger cards. Migration to Australia by young adults was strongly selective of the never married, as was return migration. Males outnumbered females especially in the long-term visitor category where their dominance in

<sup>29</sup> Murray McCaskill, "The Tasman Connection: Aspects of Australian-New Zealand Relations," *Australian Geographic Studies*, no. 20 (April 1982): 13.

the middle age brackets suggests possible marital disruption as a catalyst for migration. There was no evidence of large scale retirement migration.<sup>30</sup>

The graphs below show that my respondents were generally representative of these trends. In terms of gender, my sample differed from the overall trend in that I had more female participants than male. This was due to women being more likely to respond to my advertisements for participants. But when it came to interviews, I talked to a similar number of both men and women so that my sample would be representative. The largest group of survey and interview participants were young adults when they migrated, but the middle aged were also strongly represented. My interview respondents tended to be younger, but still covered most ages. In terms of relationship status, while some of my participants travelled alone, many migrated with family. Figure 5 also reveals that some single migrants still moved to Australia in the company of friends.



**Figure 3. Gender ratios of survey and interview participants.**

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<sup>30</sup> Carmichael, "Trans-Tasman Population Movement in the 1980s," 123.

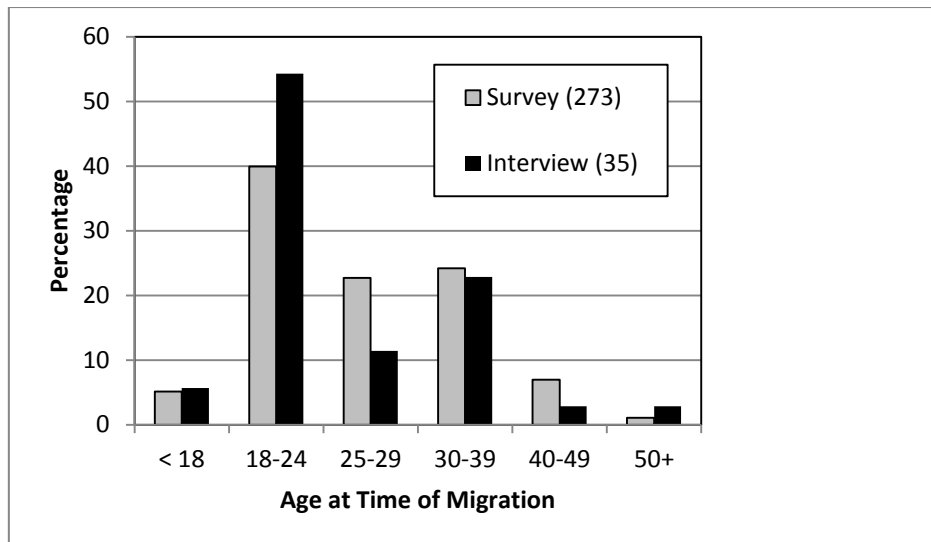


Figure 4. Representative age spread of survey and interview participants.

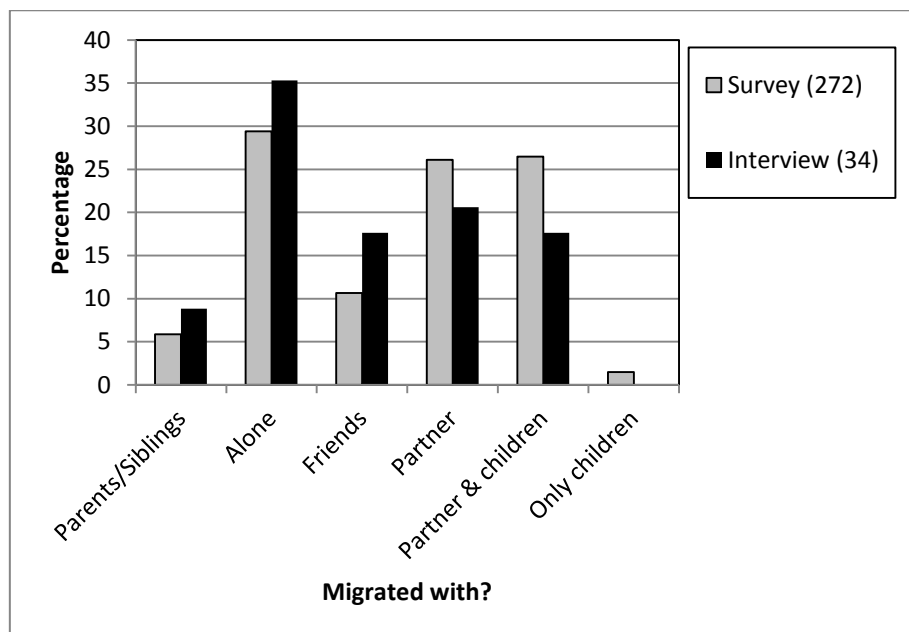


Figure 5. Participants' travel companions.

### *Occupation*

Most researchers agree that in the 1980s New Zealand and Australia had a series of common trans-Tasman labour markets. During this period, New Zealand migration to Australia was more a 'same drain' than a 'brain drain'.<sup>31</sup> New Zealand migrants to Australia were not disproportionately highly educated; rather they matched the occupational spread of the general New Zealand population. The largest occupational group out of male New Zealand

<sup>31</sup> Carmichael, "Executive Summary," xxiv.



migrants to Australia were ‘production and related workers, transport equipment operators and labourers’. The second and third largest groups were ‘professional, technical and related workers’ and ‘service workers’. Female migrants were less likely to be professional or technical workers. There were a few hyper-mobile occupational groups such as composers, performing artists, athletes, sportspeople, sculptors, painters, photographers, and creative artists. Other overrepresented groups included nurses, business and commerce professionals, and skilled tradesmen. On the other hand, some occupations such as teachers and rural workers had low migration rates. Economically active males were more likely to move to Australia than economically inactive males.<sup>32</sup> Recent analysis reveals that these trends continue into recent years. Kiwis in Australia are now more likely to work in low-skilled jobs than Australians. This is due to their overrepresentation in jobs such as mining and construction, and underrepresentation in white collar work. Contrary to the historic stereotype as dole-bludgers, New Zealanders continue to have a higher rate of employment than their Australian counterparts.<sup>33</sup>

The experiences of my participants bore out these findings. There was great diversity in pre-migration training and education, and post migration careers. I purposely selected 36 narrators who reflected this diversity. Amongst others, I interviewed artists, academics, nurses, mechanics, mothers, secretaries, teachers, mining engineers, and construction workers. Many of these migrants had retrained and changed jobs in Australia many times. Most narrators worked steadily throughout their time in Australia; some more successfully than others.

### ***Ethnicity***

The majority of migrants moving from New Zealand to Australia were New Zealand Europeans, with significant groups of Māori, Pacific Islanders, and British migrants. Prior to 1991 at least 85 percent of PLT arrivals from New Zealand were New Zealand-born.<sup>34</sup> While many migrants were Pākehā, a number were also Māori. Paul Hamer notes that while the numbers of New Zealanders leaving for Australia peaked in 1979, Māori out-migration

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<sup>32</sup> Ruth Farmer and Stephen Buetow, “Aspects of Trans-Tasman Migration in the 1980s: Insights from the New Zealand Data,” in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), 181; Carmichael, “Trans-Tasman Population Movement in the 1980s,” 124.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Haig, “Working across the Ditch – New Zealanders Working in Australia,” (Wellington: New Zealand Department of Labour, 2010), 3–5.

<sup>34</sup> Sanderson, “International Mobility of New Migrants to Australia,” 304.

peaked in 1981. Thus Māori were slower to join the exodus to Australia.<sup>35</sup> Prior to 2001 there were difficulties in estimating the number of Māori in Australia. The Australian census had misleading ethnicity questions susceptible to undercounting until 1986. Due to these problems, ethnicity questions were done away with in the censuses from 1986 to 1996.<sup>36</sup> Richard Bedford's and his colleagues' work on Māori in Australia uses 2001 Australian census data (in which a modified ethnicity question was reintroduced) to estimate that at least 90 000 Māori, out of a total worldwide Māori population of 700 000, live in Australia. Almost 30 percent of the 90 000 Māori living in Australia were born there.<sup>37</sup> Paul Hamer's 2007 study estimates that Māori make up 15 percent of New Zealand-born migrants in Australia. This finding suggests a definite over-representation of Māori among New Zealand migrants to Australia in the last few decades.<sup>38</sup> A number of the non-New Zealand-born migrants to Australia were Pacific Islanders. Recent data shows that almost 40 percent of Pacific Islanders who entered Australia in the years 2003–06 were New Zealand citizens.<sup>39</sup> A similar pattern of 'backdoor' entry operated during the twentieth century. A third of non-New Zealand-born PLT arrivals in Australia during the 1980s were British which suggests dissatisfaction with their earlier decision to migrate to New Zealand.

The majority of my participants were New Zealand Europeans. But I made sure that in both the surveys and interviews the proportion of Māori participants were close to the 15 percent mark. I also interviewed a Samoan migrant. While not completely in line with the overall statistics of ethnic groups moving from New Zealand to Australia, my participants were generally representative of Pākehā and Māori experiences.

**Table 1. Ethnicity of survey and interview participants.**

Ethnicity (%)	NZ European	Māori	Māori/Other	Samoan	Australian	Continental European
Survey (264)	85.5	11.83	1.15	0.38	0.38	0.76
Interview (34)	79.41	14.71	2.94	2.94	0	0

<sup>35</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 42.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 19–21.

<sup>37</sup> Richard Bedford et al., "Māori Internal and International Migration at the Turn of the Century: An Australasian Perspective," *New Zealand Population Review* 30, no. 1&2 (2004): 133–4.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Hamer, "Measuring Māori in Australia: Insights and Obstacles," *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand* 36(August 2009): 80.

<sup>39</sup> Geoff Woolford, "Social Protection for Migrants from the Pacific Islands in Australia and New Zealand," in *Social Protection Discussion Paper* (World Bank, May 2009): 51–2.

### ***Internal mobility and distribution of New Zealanders in Australia***

Historically, New Zealand migrants to Australia have settled in urban areas, on resource-extraction frontiers, and more recently in favoured tourist areas. Demographer Philip Guest notes that from the 1970s–1990s there were significant changes to Kiwi migrants' areas of settlement. In 1971, New South Wales and Victoria had the largest New Zealand populations. Throughout the 1970s the New Zealand populations of Queensland and Northern Territory grew rapidly.<sup>40</sup> From 1981–86, the redistribution of New Zealanders from southern, more highly urbanised states to the northern and western states continued. Western Australia and the Northern Territory had the largest relative increases in the New Zealand-born population while Queensland followed by Western Australia had the largest absolute increases. This shift in geographic distribution generally mirrored trends of Australian-born and overseas-born settlement, although more New Zealanders lived in Queensland and less in New South Wales than the average overseas-born population.<sup>41</sup> By the late 1980s the majority of New Zealanders lived in the metropolitan areas of Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth, and the Gold Coast. However, relatively high proportions of New Zealanders still resided in remote areas with economies reliant on tourism or mining.<sup>42</sup> Graeme Hugo's more recent demographic survey of New Zealanders in Australia reveals that New Zealanders continue to be more widely distributed across the nation than most other migrant groups. A significant number of New Zealanders live in non-metropolitan areas, particularly in provincial towns, mining centres, and the wheat-sheep belt.<sup>43</sup>

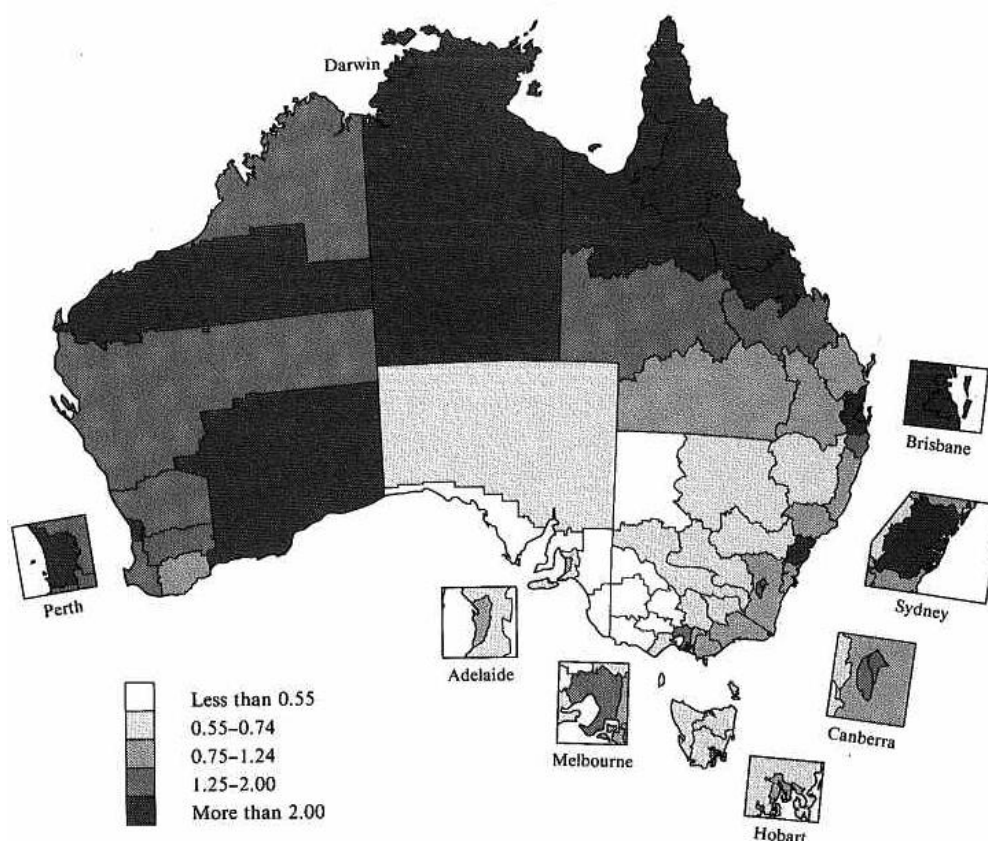
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<sup>40</sup> Philip Guest, "Distribution and Mobility of the New Zealand-Born in Australia," in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), 217–18.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid; McCaskill, "The Tasman Connection," 17.

<sup>42</sup> Guest, "Distribution and Mobility of the New Zealand-Born in Australia," 221, 253.

<sup>43</sup> Hugo, "New Zealanders in Australia in 2001," 82.



**Figure 6. New Zealand-born per 100 Australian-born, as of 1986 Census. Courtesy of Philip Guest.<sup>44</sup>**

Part of the reason for the shift in geographic distribution of New Zealanders in Australia is that they are a particularly transient group. Guest found that New Zealanders were likely to move interstate which indicates a high degree of responsiveness to labour market opportunities, the ability to compete in different regional labour markets, and a relative lack of community ties. New Zealander's mobility is partly due to their shorter period of settlement in Australia. New Zealanders' average length of residence in Australia in 1986 was 7.2 years compared to an average of 18.9 years for other overseas-born migrants. A disproportional number of New Zealanders were single young adults, many on working holidays, whom were thus very mobile. While there were high rates of interstate migration the overall effects on population distribution were small as out-migration flows from States were also relatively large.<sup>45</sup>

The graphs below reveal that my sample was representative of the above migration patterns. Participants originally moved most commonly to New South Wales, followed, by Victoria,

<sup>44</sup> Guest, "Distribution and Mobility of the New Zealand-Born in Australia," 224.

<sup>45</sup> Guest, "Distribution and Mobility of the New Zealand-Born in Australia," 218, 253.

Queensland and Western Australia, but there were participants from most other Australian states. More significantly, the second graph and table reveals participants' mobility. Many have since moved to Western Australia. Others had returned to New Zealand or moved to other states. In my interviews I talked to participants who lived in every state except Northern Territory and Tasmania. I interviewed proportionately more return migrants as there is little qualitative research on this migrant experience.

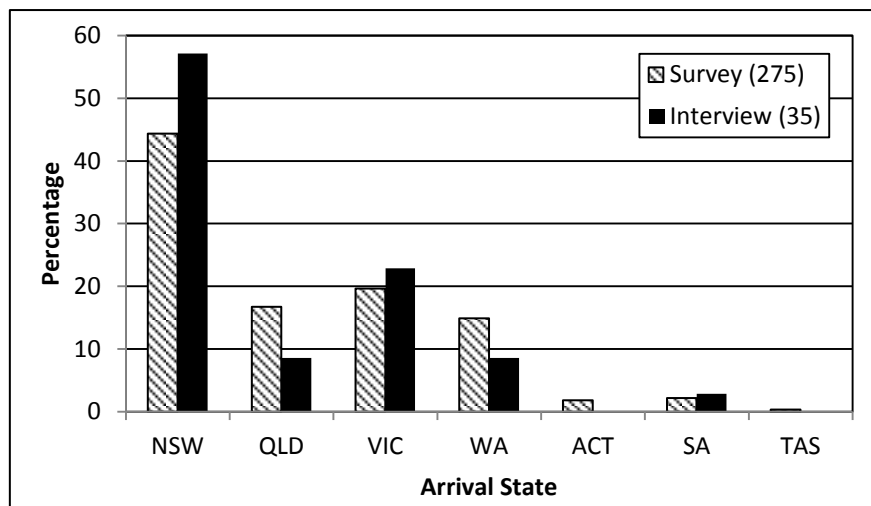


Figure 7. Initial Australian destination of participants.

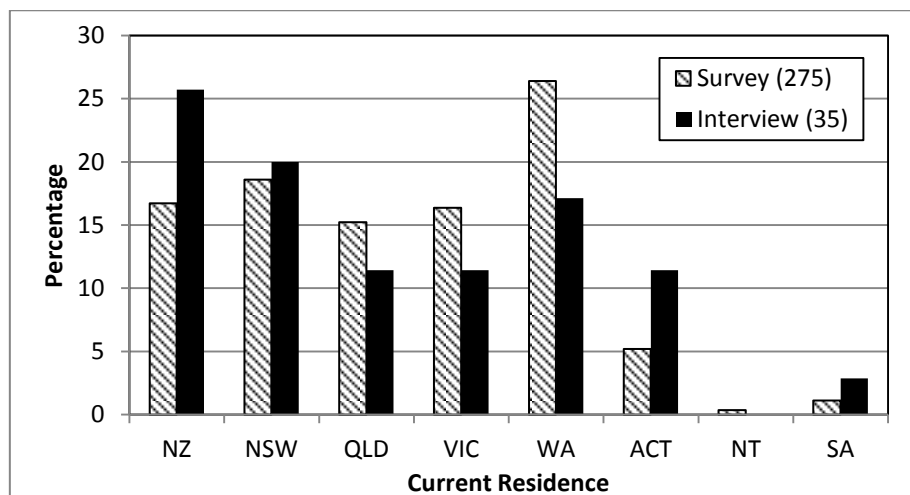


Figure 8. Current residence of participants, revealing significant return and inter-state migration.

### ***Return migration***

From the 1970s onwards return migration of New Zealand migrants to Australia became an important feature of the trans-Tasman population flow. Since the mid-1970s returning New

Zealanders dominated the Australia to New Zealand flow.<sup>46</sup> Australians who did move to New Zealand were often the family of New Zealand-born return migrants. This growth of return migration from Australia was not necessarily due to disenchantment with Australia, but rather to the huge growth of New Zealanders living in Australia during the 1970s–80s. Relatively speaking, the rate of return migration actually declined during the 1970s.<sup>47</sup> More recent research shows the continuing occurrence of return migration while highlighting a few changes. Australian demographer Graeme Hugo calculates that a fifth of New Zealand born returnees from 1991–2003 had been in Australia less than two years. The median length of residence was 5.1 years. This suggests that many New Zealanders go to Australia to work for several years but then return home.<sup>48</sup> Jacques Poot and Lynda Sanderson demonstrate that the amendments made to the social welfare policy agreement by Australia in 2001 initially caused the numbers of return migrants to New Zealand to rise.<sup>49</sup> Lynda Sanderson also argues that due to relatively low costs of travel and migration, complex patterns of circular and repeated moves are common in the Tasman world. Individuals may switch between two or more principal locations.<sup>50</sup> As connections increase trans-Tasman return migration has become increasingly fluid.

Richard Bedford and Jeremy Lowe use the 1981 and 1986 New Zealand censuses to assess the demographic characteristics of New Zealand-born return migrants from Australia. Many New Zealand return migrants were accompanied by their Australian-born partners and children. The majority of these partnerships involved a New Zealand male and Australian female, although there were plenty of New Zealand females with Australian partners. New Zealand return migrants were disproportionately represented in the age categories of under-15 years and 25–39 years compared to the general New Zealand population. This is due to the return of migrants and their children. The dip in the 15–24 category is due to this being the main age of out-migration. 1986 census data reveals that significant numbers of Māori also returned to New Zealand. The geographical spread of return migrants from Australia across New Zealand mirrors that of internal migration rather than that of other international

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<sup>46</sup> Carmichael, “History of Trans-Tasman Population Movement,” 48.

<sup>47</sup> Carmichael, “Executive Summary,” xxv; Richard Bedford and Jeremy Lowe, “Migration from the ‘Lucky Country’: A Perspective on Former Residents of Australia in New Zealand,” in *Trans-Tasman Migration: Trends, Causes and Consequences*, ed. Gordon A. Carmichael, Australia Bureau of Immigration Research, and New Zealand Immigration Service. (Canberra: Australian Govt. Pub. Service, 1993), 286.

<sup>48</sup> Hugo, “New Zealanders in Australia in 2001,” 73–4.

<sup>49</sup> Poot, and Sanderson, *Changes in Social Security Eligibility*, 13, 28.

<sup>50</sup> Sanderson, “International Mobility of New Migrants to Australia,” 296.

migrants. New Zealand return migrants tend to go back to the region they originally lived in or join family and friends.<sup>51</sup>

Figure 9 reveals that a significant number of my participants returned home at some stage to New Zealand. Some of these migrants have since returned to Australia. This graph does not detail the current home of participants but only whether they have ever returned to live in New Zealand at some stage. See Table 3 in Chapter Eight for an overview of where participants currently live. My interview sample was over-representative of return migrants as this aspect of trans-Tasman migration is important and under-investigated.

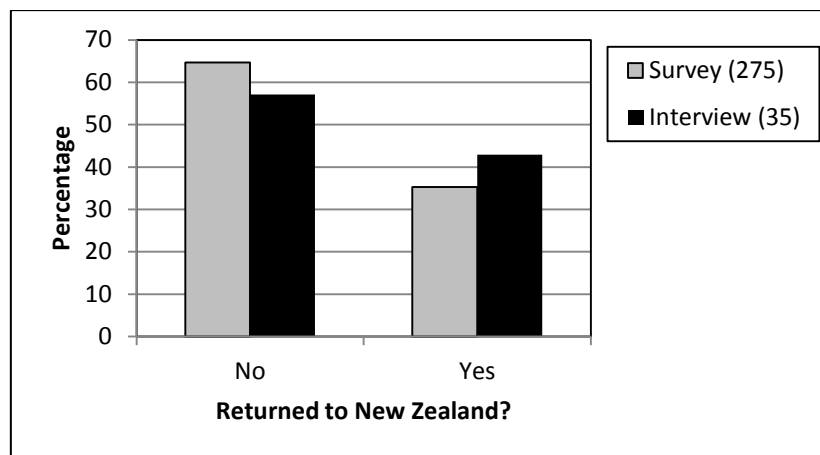


Figure 9. Significant return migration by survey and interview participants.

## Conclusions

Migrating from New Zealand to Australia has been largely free of government controls ever since colonial times. Even with more recent passport and social security controls, access to Australia remains achievable to all New Zealanders except those with criminal convictions or no money. From the 1970s onwards, increasingly affordable airfares have further enabled trans-Tasman migration. Easy entry to Australia has meant that many Kiwis have attempted to fulfil their private financial, relational, and lifestyle aspirations in Australia since the late 1960s. Ease of entry is complemented by ease of return. Many Kiwi migrants return to New Zealand to live. Some remain in New Zealand, while others find themselves moving multiple times across the Tasman.

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<sup>51</sup> Bedford and Lowe, "Migration from the 'Lucky Country'".

Some social commentators rue New Zealand's large-scale migration to Australia as a brain drain; the loss of the best and brightest Kiwis. In fact, New Zealanders who moved to Australia came from all places on the demographic spectrum; no one single age, gender, or occupational group was significantly predominant. And once in Australia, Kiwis tended to act in similar ways to native-born Australians. Over time Kiwis internally migrated to areas of economic growth such as Brisbane, Western Australia, South Australia, and the Gold Coast. Unlike other migrant groups, Kiwis' patterns of settlement and working experiences generally mimicked those of native Australians. The term 'brain drain' also obscures the fact significant numbers of Kiwis returned to New Zealand.

For this study it was impossible to achieve a completely random sample of a large number of Kiwi migrants. However my group of 275 surveys allowed me to select oral history narrators who were generally representative of migrants' different genders, ethnicities, and socio-demographic status. I was also able to select a range of narrators' whose migration experiences covered most time periods in a wide range of geographic locations. I deliberately over-selected for narrators who currently lived in New Zealand as qualitative evidence on return migration is lacking.

This chapter gives the impression that New Zealand migration to Australia is dependent on economic context. Certainly, the wider structural context does influence to a large degree whether New Zealanders feel able to move to Australia. However as the following chapter reveals, Kiwis' migration motivations generally arise from the interaction between 'macrostructural forces and microsocial networks'.<sup>52</sup> Kiwi migrants' stories reveal that relationships and personal dreams count for as much, if not more, than economic motives.

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<sup>52</sup> Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 4.



## Chapter Three: Reasons for Leaving

Charles Francis Pawson (or Frank as he likes to be known) was born on 16 April 1935. He immigrated to Australia from Gore, Southland in early April 1968 with his wife Anne and their two sons Peter and Michael. His account of his decision to migrate demonstrates how the choice to leave New Zealand for Australia arises from a culmination of factors. His story reveals the value of a full life history interview. Many of Frank's underlying reasons for migration emerged near the end



**Figure 10. Frank Pawson flying his friend's plane over Gippsland, Victoria. Courtesy of Frank Pawson.**

of the interview and only made sense in the context of his previous life experiences. At times he mentioned possible causes obliquely and required drawing out.<sup>1</sup>

Frank's initial primary explanation for leaving New Zealand for Australia was his economic aspirations. After he married Anne the couple found themselves in debt so Frank left his father's transport business and moved into construction work to increase his salary. After a few years he started a four to five year contract helping construct the Manapouri hydro project in Southland. This job was extremely well paid and he reflected that *'it sorted me out as far as my debts were concerned ... I got money in the bank and that's when I started thinking about there's more to life than working in a rainforest'*. As the Manapouri hydro project wound down there were no immediate prospects of similar work. Frank had 'mouths to feed' and could not wait around in New Zealand for more construction work. The Pawsons heard there was employment in Australia from their Australian contacts and turned their sights there.

The tipping point for Frank was his desire for warm weather. Constructing the Manapouri Dam was miserable work. Summers were hot, but winters were so atrocious that workers

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<sup>1</sup> All information on Frank's story comes from the following sources: Frank Pawson, written narrative sent to author, 23 October 2009; Frank Pawson, interview by author, Melbourne, Vic, Australia, 10 December 2009.

needed to leave the site every three months in order to avoid depression.<sup>2</sup> Frank recalled: *'I had photographs of that area where the whole place was white, not with snow but with frost. And your dozers would freeze to the ground. But most of the time it was just rivers running everywhere. No, it wasn't a pleasant place to work'*. He came home after one particularly hard three-week stint on the Wilmot Pass and said to Anne *'I've had enough of this. Why don't we go to Australia?'* The couple had previously considered migrating to Canada but when Frank's Canadian cousin warned them about the cold winters they decided against it. When I asked Frank about how he felt leaving New Zealand behind he replied *'After four or five years in West Arm I didn't really worry too much. I was just pleased to be going somewhere where there was the sunshine'*.

Another important reason for migrating to Australia was the lure of a fresh start and better lifestyle for Frank and his family. Even though his job paid well, life in the Manapouri hydro village was isolated and offered little in the way of entertainment. He felt that Australia would offer better opportunities for his sons who were *'growing up just with tussocks as neighbours, in the middle of nowhere'*. Towards the end of the interview he also reflected that once he came to Australia *'I'd probably improved out of sight'*. When I questioned what he meant by this he admitted that in Manapouri he worked long hours and was only *'interested in making a buck'*. In Australia he was able to make a new start and spend more time at weekends with his family.

Although these economic and aspirational motives were Frank's main given reasons for migration, it became clear that several other important factors *enabled* his migration. The first of these factors was Frank's and Anne's prior knowledge of Australia and Australian connections. A number of the workers at Manapouri were Australian. Frank had studied Australia in geography at school and one of his sisters lived in Queensland. Significantly, Anne had second cousins in Melbourne who helped the Pawsons find a flat and a job for Anne prior to their arrival. Discussions with their Australian contacts, combined with their own knowledge, gave the Pawsons confidence that they knew what Australia was like. The second factor was the lack of ties holding the Pawson family in New Zealand. Frank recalled:

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<sup>2</sup> Frank estimated that in the middle of winter West Arm received only half an hour of direct sunlight a day. Although for some workers this had little effect others would 'go loopy' and get 'very very depressed.' It is likely this was Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD); a condition only identified in 1984.

*Remember I'd left the Gore area in, oh I don't know, 1962. I'd been away for four years. So, four or five years I'd been away and before that I'd been away in the Air Force. So I'd been gone from that area for such a long time that I was, you know, away again, no real big deal.*<sup>3</sup>

The Pawsons' isolated existence in the Manapouri hydro village loosened their links to New Zealand family, making the prospect of migration much easier.

Another factor enabling the move to Australia was Frank's unhappiness with New Zealand society. Although he had a happy childhood in Gore in later years he felt he was denied opportunities: *'If you're not a farmer's son or a business owner's son or daughter your life is labouring and that's that. You're not gonna go any further. We'll keep you down, that's it. That's the way it was in those days'*. This sense of frustration at New Zealand society in the 1960s only emerged at the end of the interview and yet it was a contributing cause of his desire to leave New Zealand.

## **Qualitative assessment of Kiwis' migration motivations**

This chapter is based on two key ideas about migration factors which are outlined in Chapter One: firstly, migrants usually have a number of explanations for migration; and secondly, assessing the causes for migration must include conditions in both sending and receiving nations.<sup>4</sup> As seen in Frank's story, New Zealanders' decisions to move to Australia arose from their knowledge and experience of both Tasman nations. Usually several factors reinforced each other until one particularly strong motive inclined the balance in favour of migration. Rather than present all motives as equal, this chapter identifies which reasons were generally more dominant for different groups of migrants. While wider structural economic and social contexts did influence migrants' decision-making, I argue that relationships and aspirations were often even more pivotal. Indeed, Kiwis' economic and societal motivations operated at a personal level: migrants normally assessed wider macro factors in terms of impact on themselves and their families. Another key feature of New Zealand migration to Australia is the considerable number of Kiwis who migrated unintentionally. Young New Zealanders often moved to Australia on working holidays, but became long-term residents due to relationship or work commitments. Finally, this chapter argues that enabling factors, – conditions which make moving to a particular destination easy – are vital in explaining why

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<sup>3</sup> Pawson, interview.

<sup>4</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*, 62; Puentes et al., "Towards an Assessment of Migration," 8.

New Zealanders chose Australia as their destination. Macro-level migration conditions and micro-level networks reinforced each other, making Australia a convenient destination for Kiwis.

The existing explanations for New Zealand migration to Australia focus heavily on structural explanations, in particular economic factors. Jacques Poot's most recent article on trans-Tasman migration argues that 'differential economic development, driven by forces of globalization, agglomeration and technological change, has been primarily responsible for the long-run changes in the distribution of population across the regions of Australasia'.<sup>5</sup> Demographers do accept that there is room for personal motives in migrants' decision making. Ruth Farmer and Stephen Buetow argue that while migration is limited or enabled by economic systems and opportunities, migration primarily emerges out of individual and household decision making.<sup>6</sup> But as demographers generally rely on official quantitative sources, their research can only suggest rather than confirm individuals' relational reasons for migration.<sup>7</sup> Demographic and statistical research is vital to our understanding of why New Zealanders migrate to Australia but it only tells half of the story. This chapter explores the factors for Kiwi migration to Australia which have not been explored in detail; migrants' personal motives and relationships.

The two studies which do address New Zealanders' personal reasons for migrating to Australia are partial in scope. Paul Hamer's 2007 study of Māori in Australia finds that their main reasons for moving to Australia were making a new start, finding work, joining family, travel, and fulfilling lifestyle aspirations.<sup>8</sup> Hamer's study also investigates the cultural and social pressures specific to Māori which encourage them to cross the Tasman. Many Māori left New Zealand to escape negative stereotypes, racial discrimination, and negative gang or whanau situations.<sup>9</sup> But Hamer's analysis, although invaluable, is limited to Māori. Alison Green's 2006 thesis on New Zealand migrants to Australia also presents a range of different motives for migration. Green identifies Australia's better climate as the most commonly given reason for migration, but concludes that economic factors were generally more

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<sup>5</sup> Poot, "Trans-Tasman Migration, Transnationalism and Economic Development."

<sup>6</sup> Farmer and Buetow, "Aspects of Trans-Tasman Migration in the 1980s," 125–7.

<sup>7</sup> Carmichael, "Executive Summary," xxii.

<sup>8</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 43.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 46–9.

important than lifestyle factors.<sup>10</sup> While Green conducted some interviews, she does not fully engage with her qualitative evidence. Indeed, both studies fail to analyze Kiwi's motives in the context of full life histories and their use of personal qualitative evidence, particularly in Green's case, is scant. Neither study gives much attention to the role of relationships in migration, which is why this thesis particularly focuses on how relationships effect and are affected by migration.

Studying the personal side of migration requires qualitative sources. The role of relationships in determining migration cannot be assessed in the same way as larger structural factors. A recent directive on migration suggests identifying economic and social asymmetries between sending and receiving nations by comparing quantifiable indicators from the two nations. The authors suggest using indicators such as GDP, economic productivity, wage differentials, labour precariousness, human development index, gender inequalities, migration policies, and environmental degradation.<sup>11</sup> But when it comes to assessing the impact of relationships on migration, such an approach is unhelpful. Merely citing divorce, marriage, or childbirth statistics cannot explain the complex web of relational reasons which incline individuals to migrate. Instead, migration researchers rely on in-depth interviews to uncover relationship motivations. For example, Louise Ryan interviewed Irish women who migrated to England during the mid-twentieth century. Through these interviews Ryan investigates her narrators' interwoven explanations of migration as a form of personal escape and rational family strategy.<sup>12</sup> This chapter's primary sources are migrants' written and spoken narratives. As well as considering individuals' lifestyle and relational motives, I also consider economic factors from a personal perspective. Narrators did not usually consider abstract economic or social indicators when deciding to migrate; rather they experienced external structural conditions as private struggles which impinged on their aspirations for themselves and their families.

## **Migrants' motives: an overview**

I initially analysed migrants' reasons for moving from New Zealand to Australia by entering 229 written stories (some of which were very brief) and 35 oral history transcripts into the

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<sup>10</sup> Green, "New Zealand Migrants to Australia," 151–2.

<sup>11</sup> Puentes et al., "Towards an Assessment of Migration," 8–10.

<sup>12</sup> Louise Ryan, "Family Matters: (E)Migration, Familial Networks, and Irish Women in Britain," *The Sociological Review* 52, no. 3 (2004); Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood."

qualitative data analysis program, NVIVO. In each narrative I manually coded all the different migration factors and NVIVO then calculated the overall occurrence of each motive. The results of the analysis are presented below in Table 2. When the total number of mentions (column three) was higher than the number of sources (column two) this meant that some participants mentioned these issues more than once. Repetition of a motive in a narrative suggests that it was a key reason for migration.

**Table 2. NVIVO analysis of migrants' motives for moving to Australia.**

Migration motives	Number of sources motive was mentioned in	Total mentions of motive
Relationship motives		
Kinship networks in Australia encouraged move	134	160
Joining loved ones in Australia	59	75
Relationship problems in New Zealand	60	76
Lack of ties in New Zealand	30	33
Total	283	344
Economic motives		
Economic and career incentives in Australia	111	128
Financial difficulties in New Zealand	53	61
Education opportunities in Australia	21	24
Total	185	213
Aspirational and lifestyle motives		
Held negative views of New Zealand society (politics, culture, race)	45	51

Attracted by Australia's good weather	25	28
Disliked New Zealand's bad weather	23	27
Attracted to recreation/lifestyle opportunities in Australia	18	18
Wanted a new start in life	10	11
Total	121	135
Accidental migration (lifestyle motives continued)		
Wanted adventure and travel outside of New Zealand	59	69
Visited Australia on stopover to other destinations and stayed	34	36
Visited Australia on holiday and stayed	26	27
Total	119	132
Enabling factors		
Prior knowledge of Australia	62	69
Proximity	24	24
Ease of entry to Australia	18	18
Total	104	111

Although I do not separate migration factors into push and pull categories, it is clear that some motives stemmed from dissatisfaction with New Zealand while others arose from a belief that Australia offered greater opportunities. With relationships, a pull to Australian networks was common but a significant number of Kiwis also left because of unhappy New Zealand relationships. With economic motives it seems that the pull to Australia was stronger than the push from New Zealand. By contrast, Kiwis' aspirational motives for migration

usually stemmed from dissatisfaction with life in New Zealand rather than any real knowledge of the Australian lifestyle.

The table highlights a number of significant findings which this chapter explores in more detail. Kiwi migrants mentioned relationship motives more frequently than economic or lifestyle motives although the latter are still important. The difference between the second and third columns is highest amongst relationship motives but lowest amongst enabling factors. This pattern suggests migrants perceived relationship reasons as significant and requiring explanation. Another finding is that a considerable number of Kiwis never intended to move permanently to Australia; their original plans were only for a holiday or travel around Australia. And finally, enabling factors are an important cause of migration, although often mentioned only in passing. While Table 2 illustrates the frequency of different factors it does not explain their relative weighting in individual migrants' decisions. The remainder of the chapter uses narrative evidence to illustrate to what extent these factors influenced Kiwis' decisions to migrate to Australia.

## **Relationships**

Social networks and personal relationships motivated many Kiwis to move to Australia. New Zealanders' networks of Australian friends, family, and acquaintances aided migration by providing advice and practical help. Often these connections facilitated the moving process rather than causing migration. Other New Zealanders moved to Australia specifically to be with loved ones such as parents, spouses, children, and grandchildren. Alternatively, some New Zealanders left their homeland because of relationship troubles or a lack of ties.

Many New Zealanders were encouraged to migrate by Australian contacts who regaled them with glowing stories of Australia and offered practical help. Kiwi migrants recall their interest being sparked by Australian-based family or friends. A stray comment from a visiting Australian rugby team opponent, job offer from a work contact, or enthusiastic letter from a friend could all make New Zealanders consider migration. For example, Shane Te Aho, a keen surfer, decided to join his friends in Noosa:



I had a couple of surf mates that had moved to Noosa Heads in Queensland in the summer of 74 and they had always said how good the surf was and that winter was like summer in Gissy [Gibson]. So I rang them, told them my plan. They said “no sweat, get here”.<sup>13</sup>

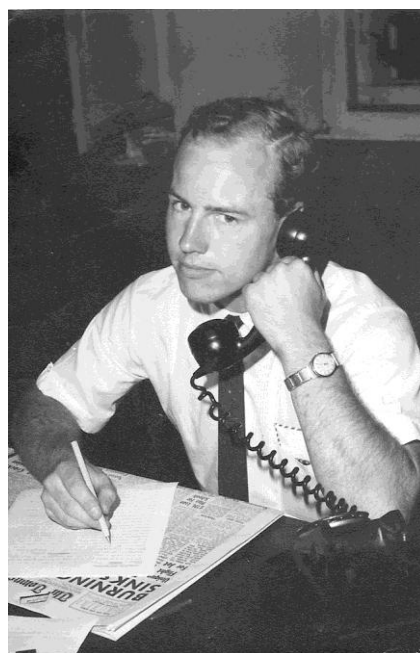
Shane’s primary motives for leaving were lifestyle related but his Australian connections affirmed and enabled his move to Australia. Once migrants confirmed their decision to cross the Tasman Australian-based contacts provided information and helped organize accommodation or job interviews. Glenda Noetzel’s brother sent her a copy of *The Age* every couple of weeks before her departure so she could look at the jobs section.<sup>14</sup>

Friends and kin in Australia were often the first point of contact on arrival. Many migrants stayed with family and friends until they could find work and accommodation. John McNeill, who was working as a young reporter for the local newspaper in Taumarunui in the late 1960s, was told by a visiting reporter about ‘a crazy newspaper he had worked on in Townsville’. Encouraged by reports of higher wages and the tropical climate he contacted the Townsville newspaper and was duly offered work. His move was considerably eased by some distant family connections in Townsville:

*As it happened I had a cousin who had married into a family that came from Townsville and actually lived there. So I sort of had an introduction into a local family there. And they were wonderful; they really took me under their wing.*<sup>15</sup>

Australia’s geographical proximity as well as the growing number of New Zealanders in Australia in the latter twentieth century meant that it was rare for New Zealand migrants to have no contacts in Australia. While such contacts were often not the primary cause of migration they often gave already dissatisfied New Zealanders the support needed to cross the Tasman.

Sometimes these networks of acquaintances in Australia could be quite large. Young New Zealanders in particular, with few responsibilities and mobile lifestyles,



**Figure 11. John McNeill as a young newspaper reporter in Townsville. Courtesy of John McNeill.**

<sup>13</sup> Shane Te Aho, written narrative sent to author, 22 September 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Glenda Noetzel, written narrative sent to author, 21 September 2009.

<sup>15</sup> John McNeill, interview by author, Christchurch, New Zealand, 17 February 2010.

were pulled to Australia by transplanted networks of Kiwis and in turn attracted more migrants themselves. David Cavanagh's story typifies this type of chain migration network. David grew up in Invercargill, trained as a mechanic, and enjoyed a social life that revolved around parties, alcohol, and cars. Some of his friends had spent nine months in Perth and on arriving back talked about how much they enjoyed their trip. David, together with a group of six other guys, moved to Christchurch. Some of these friends then moved on to Melbourne. After narrowly avoiding some drink driving convictions David felt it might be time to move on from New Zealand. When his friend rang up saying 'Look come over to Melbourne' he agreed. His friends who had previously been in Perth provided useful contacts and a car:

*They actually had a car they'd bought in Perth and they left it in Melbourne. So I knew that even though going there on holidays, I had a tool kit – because one of them was a mechanic and it was in the car – I had a car to get around in, and I had contacts in Melbourne and in Perth. So my intention was to spend a month in Australia, take the car from Melbourne back to Perth – because there was more people going from Invercargill to Perth, so if I didn't stay in Perth they would get the car. It was like a community car which is ... I suppose like backpackers do today. They just pass it on to the next person, give them the keys and away they go.<sup>16</sup>*

When David showed me photos of his early years in Australia, most of his friends also originated from Southland, New Zealand. Transplanted New Zealand social networks often encouraged younger migrants to cross the Tasman and join their mates in Australia.

Some New Zealanders migrated to Australia to be near loved ones. A few older migrants wanted to live near Australian grandchildren. Llana Heron and her husband felt their grandchildren in Perth were 'out of reach'. They moved to Western Australia in 1977 in order to share their grandchildren's birthdays, sports days, and school concerts.<sup>17</sup> Some younger migrants moved to live near a parent who had moved to Australia. Migrating was a chance to reconnect. For example, Lisa Fleischman's mother and boyfriend visited New Zealand in 1985. The boyfriend, seeing how close Lisa and her mother were, suggested that she come back to Australia to live with them. So in 1985, aged 14, Lisa flew to Sydney.<sup>18</sup> Beth Hall moved to Sydney partly to meet her mother whom she had not seen since she was two years old.<sup>19</sup> A few migrants travelled to Australia in order to connect with Australian extended family. Natalie Turner's mother was Australian-born. Natalie's parents lived in Western

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<sup>16</sup> David Cavanagh, interview by author, Christchurch, New Zealand, 9 December 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Llana Heron, written narrative sent to author, 9 September 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Lisa Fleischmann, written narrative sent to author, 17 September 2009.

<sup>19</sup> Beth Hall, written narrative sent to author, 14 September 2009.

Australia during the 1960s but her father hated the heat so the Turners returned to New Zealand. The connection with her Australian family remained strong for Natalie: 'My Australian grandparents visited us and we visited Australia. I was encouraged to save to visit my Grandad from the age of 12 and so it was that I had as a goal'.<sup>20</sup> Natalie visited Australia in 1986 aged 19 and travelled around Australia staying with her mother's friends and family.

An even stronger draw to Australia for many Kiwis was the lure of romance or marriage with an Australian. While some migrants migrated with a fellow Kiwi, a considerable number of Kiwi migrants followed an Australian-born partner across the Tasman. John Wellborne met his future wife in Auckland in 1968 where she had stopped enroute to a working holiday in Canada. After a year of dating they got engaged. John reflected, 'I must have been smitten, because despite my love of my Kiwi family, relatives, and devotion to my large circle of friends, [I] decided to move to Sydney, Australia, and there get married in the following summer'.<sup>21</sup> Daphne Park met Geoff when he came over to New Zealand for a bushwalking holiday and stayed with her family: '*it was at that point that things sort of changed. You can't help love and that happened.*' Even though she was happy in New Zealand amongst a close knit family, Daphne moved to Melbourne to be with her husband.<sup>22</sup> A gender pattern which emerged was that it was more common for men to move to Australia for their Australian wife's sake, than vice versa. Raymond Sadgrove met his Australian wife Leone in London. After sojourns in Canada, New Zealand, and Perth the couple attempted to settle in New Zealand but after two years decided to return to Perth:

The family and friends decision was difficult because my family was in NZ and Leone's family was in Perth. The children had come along and they had grandparents in both countries. We had had the experience of leaving one set of grandparents on the previous occasion when we returned to NZ. In NZ Leone chose not to work and she found it sometimes lonely when I was at work all day and she was without her family and their support. The husband's family support is not quite the same as the support of the wife's family ... Leone's happiness was a big part of the decision to move to Perth.<sup>23</sup>

In stories of relationship-motivated migration, economic and lifestyle factors usually play a secondary role. The pull to Australia for romantic and familial love was a very strong motivation for some migrants.

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<sup>20</sup> Natalie Turner, written narrative sent to author, 15 September 2009.

<sup>21</sup> John Wellborne, written narrative sent to author, 16 September 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Daphne Park, interview by author, Melbourne, Vic, Australia, 12 December 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Raymond Sadgrove, written narrative sent to author, 17 September 2009.

Conversely, toxic New Zealand relationships were also a strong factor in migration decisions. In my analysis of all migrants' written and spoken narratives, relationship problems were the most commonly mentioned reason for migrants wanting to leave New Zealand. Even years later and through a lens of self-deprecation, narrators' stories of heartbreak and loss reveal the emotional turmoil which prompted their escape to Australia. Deaths, divorces, break-ups, abusive husbands, controlling parents, and being single amidst coupled peers all caused departure for Australia. Break-ups were a common cause for impulsive migration among young migrants. Rosa Tanga left New Zealand soon after splitting up from her boyfriend:

*Mum picked me up from the railway station – because in those days the Sunday buses were really really bad – so she came and picked me up. And she was doing one of her squawks, “What are you doing with your life?” So here I had a cheating boyfriend, a job that was going shit, and a mother that was in my ear, and I had a hangover to end all hangovers. So I said I was going to Australia. And three weeks later I flew out (laughs).<sup>24</sup>*

Young men also left New Zealand due to failed relationships. Kenneth Hatter had conflicted feelings about leaving his ex girlfriend in New Zealand:

*I had recently broken off my engagement then found my ex was pregnant. It was a difficult time because I did not feel I fitted the stereotype of one that would run off to Australia. I had reached the point where it was very difficult for me to stay having reached the decision that the relationship was not going to work.<sup>25</sup>*

Troubled relationships with parents also prompted migration. Migrants fled their parents' restrictions, expectations, and problems. Graeme Shirley admitted that he now realises his father's alcoholism influenced his decision to leave: *‘He wasn't a very nice man so I was really glad to get away from New Zealand. I think because he just drank too much’.*<sup>26</sup> Jeanette Cashman had a domineering mother who disapproved of her relationship with a Catholic boy:

*I was getting hell from Mum about “you can't marry in the Catholic church, blah, blah, blah”. I mean at that stage I hadn't even been thinking marriage. So he got a transfer to another part of New Zealand ... He left and that broke us up, that split us. And that's when I nearly had a breakdown. I was just on the phone to my girlfriend one day and I said, “I'd love to get away from everything”. And she said, “Oh well, I'll come with you”.<sup>27</sup>*

Some women left with their children to escape abusive partners. Sometimes couples migrated believing that a new start would heal their troubled relationship (although it seldom did). In a few heartrending situations, family deaths prompted migration. Bev Brown's mother and

<sup>24</sup> Rosa Tanga, interview by author, Wellington, New Zealand, 23 May 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Kenneth Hatter, written narrative sent to author, 25 August 2009.

<sup>26</sup> Graeme Shirley, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 16 April 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Jeanne Cashman, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 13 April 2010.

father died within two months of each other in 1966. She and her sister left for a working holiday in Australia in the hope it would ‘help us get over the sadness’.<sup>28</sup> Negative relationship situations were a powerful reason for New Zealanders to consider moving to Australia.

A number of migrants also left New Zealand because of a lack of ties. For some migrants having few New Zealand connections was only a contributing factor for migration, making the process painless. Mark Koop left New Zealand after he lost his job and a female friend asked if he wanted to move to Melbourne. Career concerns and a potential romance were his major migration motives, but his lack of girlfriend or children made the decision easy.<sup>29</sup> Some Kiwis migrated in order to leave a stagnant social life. Shirley Leckie wrote, ‘I felt I needed to get away as my life seemed to have come to a dead end. Most of my friends had married and were raising families and somehow I had managed to get left on the shelf’.<sup>30</sup> Without New Zealand partners, parents and close friends, Kiwis were more inclined to consider starting life afresh somewhere else.

In the following analysis it is also important to remember that relationships played a role in other categories of migration causes. When young people left New Zealand in search of adventure and travel, they were often asserting their independence from their parents and family. For migrants with families, economic and lifestyle motives were held on behalf of their dependents as much as themselves. Migrants dreamed of a successful career, nice home and relaxed lifestyle not only for personal gain, but also for the wellbeing of their spouse, children, and even extended family.

## **Economic, career, and educational motives**

The most common explanation for New Zealand migration to Australia is Australia’s superior economy. Certainly unequal economic development did help form the New Zealand to Australia migration corridor. But I would argue that migrants’ perception of economic factors was generally based on their personal and family aspirations rather than rational comparison of the major economic indicators between New Zealand and Australia. Most migrants described New Zealand’s economy in terms of its impact on their daily life; they had little

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<sup>28</sup> Bev Brown, written narrative sent to author, 4 November 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Koop, written narrative sent to author, 24 September 2009.

<sup>30</sup> Shirley Leckie, written narrative sent to author, 10 September 2009.

awareness of the historical events which caused the economic climate at the time of their departure. As Portelli argues, in stories about watershed events, institutional, communal and personal points of view converge.<sup>31</sup>

New Zealand national histories emphasize that after the prosperity of the 1950s and early 1960s, New Zealand's economic performance and standards of living slipped down the OECD rankings. In December 1966, wool prices collapsed and never fully recovered.<sup>32</sup> In 1967, the New Zealand dollar was devalued against the pound. The country faced rising unemployment and inflation. Another pivotal moment of economic change was 1973; the year of the oil shock and Britain's acceptance into the EEC.<sup>33</sup> Unemployment and high inflation continued through the early 1980s in spite of Robert Muldoon's wage freezes, price freezes, and Think Big projects.<sup>34</sup> Throughout these years New Zealand struggled to diversify its export products and markets. In 1984, the fourth Labour Government introduced a comprehensive economic reform package. Known as 'Rogernomics,' these reforms opened New Zealand up to the global economy and privatised state assets. In a short space of time the government floated the exchange rate, deregulated banking, abolished price controls, dismantled protectionist trade barriers, implemented tax reform, and introduced a goods and services tax.<sup>35</sup> But after initial improvements, New Zealand's economy weakened in the 1987 share market crash. National governments continued to implement economic reforms throughout the 1990s. In the space of a few decades New Zealand's protected, prosperous, agricultural, worker-centred economy became increasingly deregulated, diversified, consumer driven, and globalised. In spite of successive governments' attempts to boost the economy, growth in real GDP per capita was low. New Zealand went from being one of the richest countries in the OECD in the 1960s to one of the poorest in the 1990s.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Alessandro Portelli, "History-Telling and Time: An Example from Kentucky," *Oral History Review* 20, no. 1&2 (1992): 61–2.

<sup>32</sup> Phil Briggs, *Looking at the Numbers: A View of New Zealand's Economic History* (Wellington: NZ Institute of Economic Research, 2003), 7.

<sup>33</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000* (Auckland: Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 2001), 369.

<sup>34</sup> Geoff Bertram, "The New Zealand Economy, 1900–2000," in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 570.

<sup>35</sup> Philippa Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 210–11.

<sup>36</sup> Bertram, "The New Zealand Economy," 571; Briggs, *Looking at the Numbers*, 8.

Narrators' descriptions of the New Zealand economy at their departure do not always accord with academics' assessments of the New Zealand economy. Although many New Zealanders were dissatisfied with New Zealand's economy their concern centred on their personal financial situation. Kiwis usually omitted the above historical events when talking about migration to Australia; rather they left because they could not find a job, buy a car, or save for a house. While some respondents mentioned recession, low exports, wage freezes and high interest and unemployment rates, the majority described their own wages, employment opportunities, and buying power. For example Frank Pawson's memories of the New Zealand economy in his survey are as follows:

I do remember that the unemployment figure was 6 per cent and work in my line was not looking too promising for the future but all members of my family appeared to be coping well. I had paid all of my debts and had money in my pocket and was fancy free and could do what I liked which was something some of the senior members of the community found hard to take. They had lost their grip, I feel I and my way of life was a bad omen for their future financial hold in the community. New Zealand was just a small food producing country.<sup>37</sup>

As his life story confirms, although Frank's motives for migration were partly financial, his economic goals arose from his concern for his family's future and negative feelings about Southland's restrictive society, rather than an objective assessment of the financial situation. Money, or the lack of it, was a key issue of concern to most people, but only because of their personal aspirations.

Often specific negative economic experiences provided the impetus for New Zealanders to consider migration to Australia. Jake Singer migrated when he was unable to obtain a mortgage.<sup>38</sup> George Clarke recalled in his oral history interview that a major reason to leave New Zealand was his inability to buy a car:

*I worked there for about twelve months and then I met another Māori fellow there and he said to me, "Oh why don't we go to Australia and work in steel works there?" I said, "Oh that's a good idea". Yeah, one of the things that influenced that was the price of cars. Cars were very expensive in New Zealand and he said to me, "You go to Australia you don't need it. You just pay a little deposit and you get a car". In New Zealand you'd pay cash for them in the '60s. So that drove us to come here.*<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Pawson, written narrative.

<sup>38</sup> Jake Singer, written narrative sent to author, 27 October 2009.

<sup>39</sup> George Clarke, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 19 April 2010.

Most of the Kiwis in my sample did have jobs before their migration but felt that wages in New Zealand were low. Many Kiwis left as they found themselves depressed by a gloomy economic climate. Gay Gibson wrote:

In July 1987 my husband who was a carpenter was finding it hard to get work in and around Waipara area due to the economic climate and he ended up having to take work in Napier. This meant he was away from home from Monday morning until Friday night. We found life was very depressing with work drying up and friends and family all talking doom and gloom.<sup>40</sup>

Gay's account suggests that the emotional strain of her husband's absence combined with friends' and family's general negativity motivated their migration. Economic factors mattered most when they impacted on migrants' relationships and sense of wellbeing. Accordingly more narrators ascribed their migration to the annoyance of not being able to 'get ahead' rather than actual poverty. Frustrated personal and family aspirations were a more significant economic factor for migration than material hardship.

In fact, although the Australian economy was protected from the worst recessions by its mineral wealth, it suffered similar changes and slumps to the New Zealand economy during this period. From the late 1950s–1960s, vast deposits of minerals, metal, and oil were discovered, creating a booming economy. Such booms were short-lived and could not protect Australia against the 1973 oil crisis. In 1974 inflation increased and Australia went into recession.<sup>41</sup> After the Governor General John Kerr, dismissed Gough Whitlam's Labor government in 1975, the Australian public voted in Malcolm Fraser's Liberal government, hoping he would solve Australia's economic problems. Fraser's cabinet implemented numerous expenditure cuts but the Australian economy remained sluggish.<sup>42</sup> Mineral exports continued to bolster the economy; by 1983 they made up over 50 percent of Australia's exports.<sup>43</sup> But this reliance on exporting raw commodities, which created relatively few jobs, ultimately contributed to Australia's economic crisis in 1983. Bob Hawke's new Labor government of 1983 addressed the crisis by deregulating the Australian economy (although in a less sweeping approach than Rogernomics). Hawke's treasurer, Paul Keating, floated the Australian dollar on the international market, made cuts in public spending, and relaxed

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<sup>40</sup> Gay Gibson, written narrative sent to author, 11 September 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Brian Carroll, *Earning a Crust: An Illustrated Economic History of Australia* (Sydney: Reed, 1977), 166.

<sup>42</sup> Russell Ward, *Concise History of Australia*, Rev. ed. (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1992), 325–9.

<sup>43</sup> Frank Welsh, *Great Southern Land: A New History of Australia* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 523.



protective tariffs.<sup>44</sup> Deregulation made the Australian economy more vulnerable. The Australian dollar lost value. Inflation, interest rates, and unemployment all rose, and divisions between the rich and poor widened. Australian historian Stuart Macintyre concludes that while Australia grew more prosperous over the 1980s and 1990s, success came at the expense of longer work hours and less concern for those who fell behind.<sup>45</sup>

While it is true that Australia was generally more prosperous than New Zealand during the latter half of the twentieth century, once again migrants based their decisions on positive generalizations from personal networks rather than factual research on the Australian economy. Large numbers of New Zealanders were lured to Australia by stories of high wages and plentiful jobs. They consistently described Australia as ‘buoyant’ and ‘booming’. Many migrants relied on Australian connections’ stories of prosperity. Marie Reichner wrote, ‘We had a couple of acquaintances who we knew had gone there and everyone was raving about it being the land of opportunity’.<sup>46</sup> Janey Jarman recalled ‘When my parents heard stories of how much easier life was over the ‘ditch’ and how many more jobs there were Mum decided after a lot of angst we would go’.<sup>47</sup> Western Australia, with its mining boom, was a particular focus of desire. Bruce Ringer moved to Gove, WA, after an offer of work from his Australian-based employer in New Zealand:

*RB*                      *Why do you think you’d made up your mind that you wanted to go?*

*BR*                      *Because I’d always, it was a dream, even at Boys’ High. I remember sitting in an English class telling the bloke next to me, I said, “It would just be great to go to Australia, work in the mines for a couple of years, make a lot of money and come back and you’re set”.*

*RB*                      *Where do you think you’d heard of that idea that you go to the mines and make a lot of money?*

*BR*                      *Well it was just general knowledge that you just sort of knew; you could make a lot of money in Australia in the mines. And we didn’t know how much or anything like that. It was just that you could make money there. And so I thought, “Oh well I’ll try it”. I had this opportunity.<sup>48</sup>*

Many Kiwis moved to Australia without organising a job because they were confident they would easily find one in such a buoyant economy. News of Australia’s opportunities from

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<sup>44</sup> Stuart Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 248–9.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 251, 254, 265, 282.

<sup>46</sup> Marie Reichner, written narrative sent to author, 22 September 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Janey Jarman, written narrative sent to author, 15 September 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Bruce Ringer, interview by author, Brighton, QLD, Australia, 19 September 2010.

trusted acquaintances in Australia gave migrants (sometimes misplaced) confidence about work prospects.

For some New Zealanders (usually tertiary educated men) migration to Australia was a more considered career move. Some migrants were transferred by their company. Large businesses like AMP often relocated New Zealand staff to Australian offices. For others the move was part of a carefully thought out career path. For example, Henry DeSilva was very aware of his long term reasons for migration:

I knew I wanted to be a principal in Catholic secondary schools. No problem taking promotions as a young man, and shifting around, but about 30 I wanted to marry, have a family. I needed somewhere that was big enough to have lots of schools in an easy drive so that we could live in one place but I could still change job.<sup>49</sup>

Others who had training in specialized fields and could not find work in New Zealand looked to Australia's larger job market. Craig Bosel, like many other geologists, was tempted by the Australian mining industry: 'I didn't want to leave New Zealand, however the reality was there were a lot of jobs on offer to new geologists in Australia, and very few in New Zealand'.<sup>50</sup> A relatively large number of my respondents pursued academic careers in Australia.<sup>51</sup> For men in particular the ability to move forward in their job field was an important reason to move across the Tasman.

A subset of career-motivated migrants entered Australia for educational purposes. Usually these migrants wanted to follow educational opportunities unavailable in New Zealand. Joanna Matheson attended the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in Melbourne to do a technical theatre degree.<sup>52</sup> Mildred Royce attended the Seventh Day Adventist College near Newcastle as there was no comparable institution in New Zealand.<sup>53</sup> A considerable number of Kiwis undertook postgraduate degrees in Australian universities, many on scholarships. This is a result of the academic expectation of holding degrees from different universities as well as New Zealanders' eligibility for Australian domestic fees and funding. Some migrants moved in order to further their professional training. Elizabeth O'Connor's family migrated

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<sup>49</sup> Henry DeSilva, written narrative sent to author, 9 September 2009.

<sup>50</sup> Craig Bosel, written narrative sent to author, 25 September 2009.

<sup>51</sup> This is probably due to some self-selection bias. Migrants with postgraduate degrees were more likely to respond due to their interest in helping a fellow academic. Nonetheless many Kiwi academics do work in Australia because of New Zealand's small number of academic institutions.

<sup>52</sup> Joanna Matheson, interview by author, Wellington, New Zealand, 22 May 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Mildred Royce, interview by author. Sydney, NSW, Australia, 17 April 2010.

to Melbourne so that her doctor husband could do his training in child and adolescent psychology.<sup>54</sup> Educational opportunities were not a common factor for migration but they provided a powerful motive for those who did move to further their education. This motive often caused people to move who were not otherwise dissatisfied with life in New Zealand.

## **Lifestyle aspirations**

Lifestyle factors were often secondary in importance to economic and relationship motives amongst mid-life and older migrants. For younger migrants however, aspirational lifestyle motives were more influential and generally stemmed from dissatisfaction with life in New Zealand.

Some New Zealanders migrated because of concerns about specific New Zealand political and societal issues. A number of Māori migrants left because of their experiences of racism or fears about gang connections. The Jellick family migrated when their eldest daughter made friends with pre-teens associated with the Mongrel Mob and Storm-Troopers.<sup>55</sup> Benjamin Pittman was frustrated by the treatment of Māori: *‘One of the big things that I found very irksome was the fact that there was a lot of denial about injustices that had been done to Māori’*.<sup>56</sup> While most Kiwis did not cite political reasons for departure, a very few politically active migrants left New Zealand because of their frustration with the New Zealand government’s actions. Andrea Shoebridge’s experiences of a near fatal ectopic pregnancy politicized her into a practicing feminist. She became increasingly frustrated with the New Zealand government’s policy on abortion: *‘I wrote to the government and explained that I was leaving NZ because of social policy such as that on abortion, shaped by the Muldoon government, that caused me to feel increasingly alienated. The country seemed to be tightening into pursed lipped conservatism that was distressing’*.<sup>57</sup> A few migrants cited irritation with the policies of Muldoon’s National government or Lange’s Labour government as a reason for migration. However, the scarce number of migrants who cited external political or societal reasons for migration reflects that people usually moved for personal lifestyle reasons.

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<sup>54</sup> Elizabeth O’Connor, interview by author, Wellington, New Zealand, 21 May 2010.

<sup>55</sup> The Mongrel Mob and Storm Troopers are gangs, primarily made up of Māori and Pacific Islanders, with links to criminal activities. Katrina Richmond, written narrative sent to author, 6 June 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Benjamin Pittman, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 15 April 2010.

<sup>57</sup> Andrea Shoebridge, written narrative sent to author, 21 September 2009.

Young migrants in particular often felt New Zealand society was quiet and restrictive. Narrators who left New Zealand in their youth stated New Zealand society expected migrants to conform, frowned on pregnancy outside of marriage, offered limited recreational opportunities, and had a definite class system. Life in New Zealand was dull, insular, boring, backward, and claustrophobic. Jonathan Archer, who moved from Auckland to Adelaide in 1967, reflected:

*New Zealand always seemed to be a bit remote from things and I had the view of New Zealand that [it] was a pretty stifling sort of place ... I used to have a joke that you could fire a cannon down Queen's Street and most of the Aucklanders wouldn't know about it until they read about it in Monday's Paper ... And my parents were very much of that genre – you know, "What will the neighbours say?" So there's a pressure to conform that was huge ... I think too you had a whole lot of established firms and people with money and they seem to run everything and own everything.<sup>58</sup>*

Some single women who left New Zealand during the 1960s and early 1970s felt that New Zealand offered them few opportunities. Pat Nicholson grew up in Napier in the 1960s. She wrote, 'there were not a lot of options for girls other than marriage'.<sup>59</sup> Young Kiwis with negative attitudes about New Zealand society looked further afield to Australia's bustling cities. Migrants' view of Australia was that it was bigger, busier, and more vibrant than New Zealand. Kiwis generally actually knew little about Australian politics, culture, and racial issues (excepting gay men who knew that Sydney, with its large gay community, offered more opportunities for them to explore their identity). Rather, young Kiwis aimed to exchange New Zealand's dullness for Australian society which was positively perceived but in rather vague holiday-like terms.

Just like Frank in the opening story, some Kiwis moved to Australia in search of a warmer climate. A few named the cold New Zealand weather as the tipping point for their decision to leave. Shane Te Aho's description of his moment of truth is particularly evocative:

*In the winter of 74 some mates and I were surfing one of our favourite breaks. The girls were in the cars, we had made a fire on the beach. It was about 4ft, just a picture. I remember looking around the hills and seeing snow. The next thing I'm ducking under a wave and bingo, it was like someone had cut the top of my head off, it was so bloody cold. I stuck it out but when we were all sitting around the fire I said, "That's it. It's too bloody cold. I'm going to Australia".<sup>60</sup>*

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<sup>58</sup> Jonathan Archer, interview by author, Melbourne, Vic, Australia, 9 December 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Pat Nicholson. written narrative sent to author, 26 August 2009.

<sup>60</sup> Te Aho, written narrative.

Australia was known to be warm and sunny. A few migrants moved for health reasons, to combat arthritis or asthma. Some migrants had been on a holiday to Australia and on returning to New Zealand found the contrast depressing. Marilyn Wilson had a family holiday in June 1980 on the Gold Coast: ‘After the holiday excitement and beautiful warm weather, we returned to cold, grey smoggy Christchurch’.<sup>61</sup> Although not a common factor in causing migration the warm climate was often a contributory factor in attracting Kiwis to cross the Tasman.<sup>62</sup>

## Accidental migration

Younger migrants often settled in Australia unintentionally. Many young New Zealanders who migrated to Australia did so almost accidentally as part of their travel experiences. The Overseas Experience (OE) is a rite of passage for many young New Zealanders. Journeys ‘home’ (to Britain) were a cultural necessity for writers and artists through the 1920s and 1930s. As the world opened up in the 1950s more young New Zealanders visited Britain and Europe to explore their past or escape the stifling narrowness of New Zealand. By the late 1960s and early 1970s the OE and international holidays were an accepted part of Kiwi culture.<sup>63</sup> Many respondents referred to their desire to travel. A trip to Australia was an ‘adventure’. For quite a few, Australia was intended to be the first stopover on an OE around Europe and Asia. Julie Podstolski and her boyfriend Matthew Clements had planned to come to Australia to work for a year and then travel overseas. Matthew articulated their feelings at the time:

*New Zealand of course is famous for this OE thing you know. To go overseas and find out the real world. Because you live in New Zealand. It’s a small country; it’s on the end of the earth. You really, if you’re going to be anybody, do anything, know anything, you really need to go out and see what happens in the world.*<sup>64</sup>

Matthew and Julie’s plan went ‘pear shaped’ after they married and Julie fell pregnant. They settled in Australia but travelled through Europe a few years later with a toddler in tow.<sup>65</sup> Suzanne Belladonna only came to Australia after a few years during which she worked,

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<sup>61</sup> Marilyn Wilson, written narrative sent to author, 3 September 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Many migrants mentioned Australia’s better weather but did not go into the same detail as they did with other causes.

<sup>63</sup> Claudia Bell, “The Big ‘OE’: Young New Zealand Travellers as Secular Pilgrims,” *Tourist Studies* 2, no. 2 (2002): 144–5.

<sup>64</sup> Julie Podstolski and Matthew Clements, interview by author, Perth, WA, Australia, 27 August 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Julie Podstolski, written narrative sent to author, 3 July 2009.

saved, and travelled in Europe. Like many others, England rather than Australia was Suzanne's ultimate goal:

*I always wanted to go one day to see where my mother was born. So I guess I got the travel bug. When I ... grew up that's where I wanted to see, go and meet them, new cousins and that in England ... When I left school I wanted to get a job in travel. Not that I wanted to leave my family but I just wanted to experience it. Yeah, so go[ing] to England was my goal.<sup>66</sup>*

On Suzanne's travels overseas she met an Italian Australian, Vince, whom reconnected with and later married during an extended holiday in Australia with her retired parents. A few New Zealanders moved on to Australia after other travel. On returning to New Zealand they found life too quiet and dull so looked across to Australia's larger cities.

In some cases young Kiwis went to Australia on what was supposed to be a short holiday. Different reasons for a holiday in Australia were attending weddings, catching up with friends and family, taking a break after stressful events in New Zealand, or saving money for further travel. Younger migrants often backpacked around Australia, working in seasonal jobs and staying with friends and family. Christine Hagan's experience was typical:

*I came to Australia originally on a camping holiday for three weeks. I was just starting nursing training and had had a relationship bust-up. It was my mother [who] suggested a holiday in Australia. I travelled through NSW, Vic, NT, Qld. It was awesome and I had such a good time. I did not go back to New Zealand.<sup>67</sup>*

Some young Kiwis only stayed a few years in Australia and in retrospect felt that their time in Australia was only a working holiday. But many others remain there decades later.

The notable commonality between these young travel-oriented migrants was that they never firmly intended to migrate when they left New Zealand. Their permanent settlement in Australia was unintentional. James Stephenson reflected on this when he wrote to me:

*I wonder if I fit your criteria as in a way I didn't really migrate to Australia as a conscious decision ... The idea at the time was to see as much of Australia as possible with not much planning past that other than perhaps continuing on to England and other parts of the world.<sup>68</sup>*

These accidental migrants found themselves settled in Australia for romantic, lifestyle or financial reasons. Many met Australian partners. Others found they loved the Australian way

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<sup>66</sup> Suzanne Belladonna. interview by author, Christchurch, New Zealand, 25 January 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Christine Hagan, written narrative sent to author, 28 October 2009.

<sup>68</sup> James Stephenson, written narrative sent to author, 2 October 2010.

of life. Some acquired fulfilling and well paying jobs. For these young migrants, settling in Australia was more an evolving process than a planned decision.

## Enabling factors

Although relationship, economic, and lifestyle factors were the key reasons given by New Zealanders for their decision to move to Australia, their actual migration was made possible by enabling factors. Stephen Castles states that international migration is an aspect of globalisation (characterised by cross border flows of information, people, trade, and media) and is enabled by modern information and communications technology.<sup>69</sup> Jose Moya in his book *Cousins and Strangers*, argues that it is possible to find many historical examples of nations where the existence of ‘push’ or ‘pull’ economic or social factors never led to migration. Immigrants tend to stress their personal agency but migration also needs to be understood in the context of wider trends which enable large people movements.<sup>70</sup> In the case of New Zealand migration to Australia, modern globalisation made communication and travel between the two nations increasingly affordable and accessible. As pointed out in Chapter Two, the lack of bureaucratic barriers mean that trans-Tasman migration is uncomplicated. Moreover, the large numbers of Kiwis in Australia mean that most potential migrants had networks of possible contacts whom could ease the migration process.

The New Zealand–Australia migration corridor is distinguished by several factors which enable migration. Although Australia is more than 2000km from New Zealand, it is still a cheaper and closer destination than other destinations such as Asia, Europe, or America. For New Zealanders wanting to travel, migrate, or holiday, Australia was a convenient destination. Australia is also culturally similar to New Zealand which made it a less daunting move. In addition, New Zealanders and Australians enjoyed mutual free entry to each others’ countries through the Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement (TTTA). Up until 1981 New Zealanders did not need passports to enter Australia. New Zealanders have never needed to apply for work visas for Australia and were eligible for Australian social security until

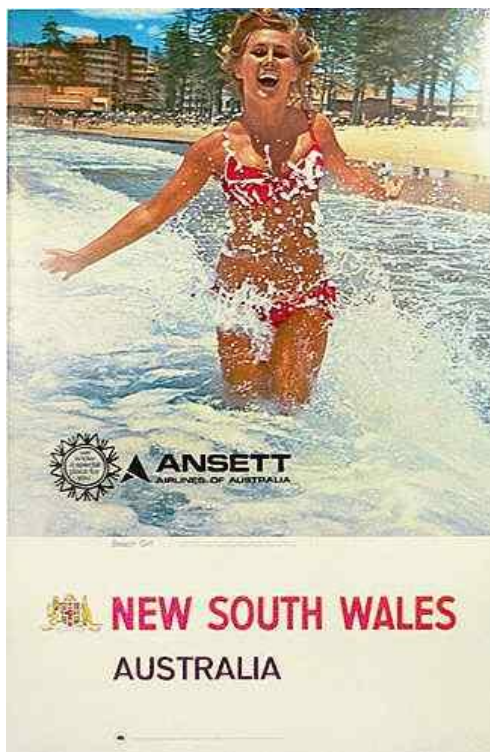
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<sup>69</sup> Stephen Castles, “International Migration at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century: Global Trends and Issues,” *UNESCO: Global Trends and Issues* (2001), [http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl\\_images/journal\\_samples/issj0020-8701~52~165~258/258.pdf](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/bpl_images/journal_samples/issj0020-8701~52~165~258/258.pdf) (accessed 25 January 2011)

<sup>70</sup> Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 13, 391.

2001.<sup>71</sup> New Zealanders' qualifications are recognized in Australia and they pay domestic fees in educational institutes (although the fees must be paid up-front). All these factors make migration seamless. This is why many travel-oriented migrants stopped off first in Australia on their OE. Once in Australia, Kiwis were able to turn their holiday into a permanent migration without doing any paperwork. Some Kiwis mentioned that they chose Australia over other destinations because of these enabling factors; doubtless many more were influenced by these conditions even if they did not identify them as a key reason for their migration.

Another enabling factor for migration to Australia was that many New Zealanders' held very positive perceptions of Australia due to transnational flows of information and people. A few



**Figure 12. 1960s Ansett tourism poster. The text continues “We know a special place for you. This girl at Manly is typical of the thousands of gorgeous honey-brown Venuses in mini-bikinis who frolic in the surf on Sydney's northern and southern beaches during the long golden days of summer.” Published by the Dept of Tourism, Sydney. Photograph by Bruce Hamilton. Printed by Offset Alpine Printing Pty Ltd, Sydney.**

<sup>74</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

migrants had read books on Australia or seen programmes on television. Jonathan Archer tuned into Australian radio stations as a 10 year old.<sup>72</sup> Christine Reis's perception of Australia came from magazines: ‘I do remember reading the Australian glossy magazines, e.g. Cleo, Cosmopolitan, Dolly, thinking “what a great place Australia looks. Suntanned bodies, colourful happy people”’.<sup>73</sup> Julie Podstolski gleaned her impressions of Australia from various places:

*Well I think I still had this vision in my head of these glossy pamphlets I'd seen. I remember also when I was still at primary school doing a project on Australia. And Australia always seemed like the golden land to me. And thoughts of Sydney, I remember that there were always ads on TV for you know, holidaying in Australia. So everything one ever saw was glossy. Like even the big face of Luna Park, you know things like that.*<sup>74</sup>

For many migrants, prior holidays and visits to kin in Australia formed the basis of their knowledge. In

*New Zealand and Australia: Where Are We Going?: Papers v Zealand Institute of International Affairs at Victoria University, and New Zealand Institute of International Affairs. (Wellington: 2001), 83.*

ior, 9 November 2009.



1965 both Qantas and Air New Zealand launched trans-Tasman jet flights. Australia and New Zealand were each other's biggest tourist market and the two nations' tourist bureaux collaborated to promote trans-Tasman travel. The 1960s and 70s saw a substantial increase in short-term trips across the Tasman for tourism, holidays, business, and family reunions.<sup>75</sup> When people recalled these first holidays they focused on good weather and tourist activities. Daphne Park had spent a summer in Melbourne before she moved there to live with her husband. She reflected: *'I think being in holiday mode and not committed to being here, there's sort of a dream that it's a great place and it's exciting and vibrant, and a lot of different cultures, different foods, and restaurants. And it's warmer and it felt good.'*<sup>76</sup> In reality Daphne found that living in Melbourne was different to, and harder than, her holiday. Although their holiday experiences were not a realistic sample of everyday life in Australia, positive memories helped convince New Zealanders to return to Australia to live.

The last major enabling factor, as indicated in the section on relationships, was the presence of New Zealand contacts in Australia. Although migratory movements are often initiated by external factors, once a pattern is established migrants usually follow familiar routes, helped along by friends and family already in the migration destination. Networks of friends and family in Australia not only encouraged Kiwis to move; they also provided information, emotional support, and practical aid. For example, Frank mentions how his wife's cousins organised a flat and a job for them. Although I have already detailed these networks under the relationships subheading, trans-Tasman connections also qualify as an enabling factor. Indeed, this is why relationships are such a vital migration factor. Economic and lifestyle indicators are abstract conditions which exist irrespective of migrants' personal decisions. By contrast, Kiwi migrants' kin in Australia often actively influenced the decision to migrate by persuasively describing the advantages of life in Australia and providing pragmatic advice and support.

## Conclusions

Although economic and lifestyle aspirations were important factors causing migration, personal relationships were the most common and powerful factor in motivating migrants to move. Narrators generally spoke or wrote about their relationship motives more frequently,

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<sup>75</sup> Mein Smith, Hempenstall, and Goldfinch, *Remaking the Tasman World*, 67.

<sup>76</sup> Park, interview.

and in more detail than other factors. Both positive and negative relationships prompted emotions which made New Zealanders receptive to migration. In addition, relationship considerations were implicated in other migration motivations. For example, finances are intimately connected to relationships. The loss of a job or financial instability puts pressure on families. So, when Frank moved to Australia to find work, it was for his family just as much as himself. Likewise Henry DeSilva pursued a career as a headmaster in Australia in order that he could have a settled family life in his future. Relationships also acted as an enabling factor. Australian contacts' encouragement and practical help made Kiwis more likely to move to Australia.

Certain types of motivations were more instrumental than others in encouraging migration. Following loved ones to Australia or fleeing toxic relationships were both powerful motives. By contrast, the support of networks of friends and family already living in Australia was generally a more low-key, enabling factor. When Australian contacts suggested moving across the Tasman this often tapped into migrants' deeper dissatisfactions with New Zealand society or lifestyle aspirations. Similarly, some economic factors were very powerful. The attraction of a specific job or educational opportunity often caused otherwise contented New Zealanders to migrate to Australia. More general feelings of 'not getting ahead' might just add weight to other stronger motives for departure. Many young migrants, while not purposely intending to settle in Australia were driven out of New Zealand by their wanderlust. Australia's attractive reputation, proximity, and ease of entry all supported migration but were not usually the primary catalyst for leaving.

It is important to note that New Zealand migration to Australia was not always the result of a carefully planned decision. A majority of young single migrants never intended to move permanently to Australia. Young Kiwi migrants were prone to make the decision to leave New Zealand impulsively. Their lack of ties and responsibilities meant they could depart almost instantly. Many were impelled by dreams of travel and adventure and expected to later return to New Zealand. Indeed, some of my sample did return to New Zealand after a few years away. It was only subsequent events which led these Kiwi visitors to become permanent migrants in Australia.

Although this chapter organized New Zealander's migrants' motives thematically, it needs to be stressed that the Kiwis in my sample nearly always migrated for more than one reason. No

single factor accounts for the complexity of migrants' decision-making. As Frank's story demonstrates, a whole range of factors usually combined to influence New Zealanders to move to Australia. Some of these reasons might go back years. For example, when Jonathan Archer tuned into Australian radio stations as a 10 year old this planted inside him a positive attitude towards Australia. There was usually a tipping point which precipitated the ultimate decision. For Shane Te Aho it was the miserable Gisborne winter, whereas for Rosa Tanga it was her cheating boyfriend. Every migrant had a slightly different combination of reasons to leave New Zealand. Kiwis were not mindlessly participating in a 'migration trend' but were responding to their own particular situation. While the wider structural context did affect when, why, how, and where they moved, Kiwis' migrations were also a response to their personal dreams, problems, stresses, and relationships.

## Chapter Four: Leaving New Zealand

Paul and Rosanna McEvedey left New Zealand for financial and personal reasons in April 1969. Paul was offered a higher paying job in Western Australia. The majority of his econometrician classmates already worked overseas and the McEvedeys saw the job offer as the first stage of an extended working holiday. More importantly, moving offered the young couple the opportunity to leave behind difficult family relationships, particularly their fraught connection with Paul's mother.

Paul had more reasons to leave than Rosanna but the couple decided jointly that he should apply for the job in Perth. Rosanna wrote that it took mere moments for the two of them to decide that he should respond to the job advertisement in *The Dominion* when they saw the size of the salary offered.<sup>1</sup> Paul felt he 'stuffed up' his interview so was surprised to receive a telegram three weeks later offering him a job and asking him to start in two weeks. He estimated that it actually took five to six weeks to wrap up loose ends and leave New Zealand. Preparations were necessarily hasty; Paul reflected, '*We actually didn't notify as many people as we could because we [were] concerned in getting on the plane. And we didn't think about it anywhere near as thoroughly [as] perhaps we could have.*'<sup>2</sup>

The McEvedeys rushed to make the necessary preparations before departure. Although Paul's Australian employer paid their travel expenses the couple researched comparative boat and plane fares. They made no plans for after their arrival in Australia; instead they focused on wrapping up their New Zealand affairs. They stored or threw out most of their possessions. Apart from personal effects, they took with them only a few chairs, tea boxes, and wedding presents. The most important cargo was their cat, Itty Bitty. Rosanna worked at the Department of Agriculture in Wellington and through her contacts she organized the cat's emigration. The McEvedeys cancelled their Wellington flat's lease and sorted out the finances for a section they owned in Ilam, Christchurch. Although building was presently too expensive they aimed to keep the land as an investment and construct a home when they returned. Paul and Rosanna planned to travel for five years, spending two years in Australia and then moving on to the United Kingdom and possibly France. The other main organizational issue related to Paul's car, a bright yellow Riley Elf Mini Cooper. Paul had

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<sup>1</sup> Rosanna McEvedey, written narrative sent to author, 31 August 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Paul McEvedey, interview by author, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 23 April 2010.

been given the car by his father's trustees while at university.<sup>3</sup> The wrangle over ownership of the car was frustrating for him:

*The trustees said "You can't take that car to Australia". I objected furiously but I was too young – 22 and a bit – to really fight it. Now, the car was in my name, it had been transferred. It had certainly been paid for by estate funds but when it came to me it was mine. And they said, "No we want it back". Probably a week and a half got tied away in just the sheer bullshit of arguing about what happened to the car, where it went, who had rights to it.*<sup>4</sup>

Even to this day, Paul bemoaned the loss of his beloved car. Once the McEvedeys finished packing up they travelled to Christchurch, flying from there to Perth via Sydney and Melbourne.

Emotional responses to the McEvedeys' migration differed. Paul's father was positive about the move. The couple's friends were unsurprised and supportive. By April 1969 almost all of Paul's classmates had moved away from Christchurch to Canada, Australia, the UK, and the United States. Rosanna's family felt 'shocked and sad' at her departure although they reconciled themselves to her decision. The main opponent was Paul's mother with whom the couple had a difficult relationship. Paul's mother – a strong Catholic – had never forgiven Paul's father for separating from her. When Paul's father served her with divorce papers three days after Paul and Rosanna's wedding, she blamed Rosanna. In spite of her bitterness, Paul's mother opposed the McEvedeys' migration. Paul remembers that after he telegrammed his mother about their decision to move to Australia, she sent an ex-girlfriend to their address, without telling the poor girl he was already married. It was an awkward situation for all involved. His mother then involved his extended family:

*My mother sent Michael [Paul's cousin whom he disliked] to have a go at me that I was deserting my mother, and basically this simply wasn't done. And my Aunt, who was my godmother and Michael's mother said, "Don't listen to that stupid git. We love you anyway. Get on the plane and go". So yeah, weird cross currents.*<sup>5</sup>

Given the difficulties with his mother, unsurprisingly Paul's main emotion on leaving was overwhelming relief. The concept of he and Rosanna being free to make their own life was a 'heady brew'. Rosanna's feelings were more mixed: she was close to her two sisters and regretted leaving her family behind. However, Rosanna knew migration offered her the chance to 'get some much needed distance' from her mother-in-law.

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<sup>3</sup> Paul's alcoholic father was made a ward of the court due to his financial irresponsibility with the McEvedey family trust

<sup>4</sup> Paul McEvedey, interview.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

## New Zealand migrants and the leaving experience

One of this thesis's key arguments is that New Zealanders who move to Australia are a migrant group and should be studied as one. While some work on the motives of New Zealanders moving to Australia exists there is no research which describes the preparations New Zealanders made before leaving for Australia. This chapter fills the historiographical gap by analysing how the final choice to move was made and outlining the practical aspects of moving country. My approach is modelled on other qualitative migration studies. Most migration histories using narrative evidence describe the leaving process in detail. For example, the third chapter of Angela McCarthy's book, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration, 1921–65*, is entitled 'organising the move'. McCarthy considers personal networks, possible destinations, assisted passages, travel agents, preparations for leaving, and farewells.<sup>6</sup> New Zealanders' leaving preparations were less arduous, due to Australia's proximity and ease of access. But as this chapter reveals, Kiwis still needed to finalise their decision, pay for their ticket, pack and sell up in New Zealand, pre-arrange work and accommodation in Australia, and travel across the Tasman Sea.

Migrants' experiences of leaving New Zealand were also significantly affected by their relationship situation. New Zealanders' personal relationship status made a big difference to their mode of departure. While young single migrants could leave without considering others, those with partners and dependents had to plan more carefully. Migrants' friends' and families' responses also affected the leaving process. Many migrants encountered a mix of both positive and negative emotions from family and friends. Migrants' relational context influenced their own feelings at departure. For example, leaving loved family was painful whereas escaping dysfunctional relationship provided a sense of release.

This chapter also reveals that New Zealanders' preparations for migration were different to those of many other migrant groups to Australia. Australian migration histories generally focus on national groups of British, European and Asian migrants.<sup>7</sup> Often these migrants moved in a post-war context across great distances. Accordingly, their preparations and journeys were expensive, permanent, time-consuming and stressful. Government sponsorship

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<sup>6</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*, 64–84.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Thomas, *Dreams in the Shadows*; Gianfranco Cresciani, *The Italians in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Suzanne D Rutland, *The Jews in Australia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*.

and assisted passages were common. For example, many British migrants were sponsored by the Australian and New Zealand governments to migrate to the antipodes after World War II.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, New Zealanders' relocations to Australia were relatively inexpensive, occurred without government involvement, and were facilitated by existing Australian networks. Migrants' leaving preparations were often completed in a short space of time. While some migrants made careful and comprehensive plans a surprising number were disorganised. Some Kiwis departed on a whim, travelling only weeks after their initial decision to move.

The other significant difference about Kiwis' leaving experiences is that their travel memories are usually peripheral to their migration narrative. Most European migrants who moved to Australia prior to the 1970s travelled via boat taking several weeks, even months, to arrive. Often these journeys operated as holidays and included stopovers in foreign ports. Accordingly, travel memories formed an integral part of these migrants' moving stories. *Ten Pound Poms* devotes a chapter to exploring migrants' vivid memories of onboard friendships, recreation, romance, class issues, and tourist activities.<sup>9</sup> But Kiwis' journeys across the Tasman, even when made via ship, were brief and not particularly momentous.

### ***How was the decision made?***

Migration studies reveal that migrants often consider several destination options. In Megan Hutching's study of assisted British migrants to New Zealand, just under half of her respondents thought about other destinations.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, for Kiwis, Australia was not the only possible destination. Just as Paul and Rosanna planned to travel on to England and France, many migrants considered moving to nations other than Australia. The most popular option was Britain, followed by Canada. South Africa was also a possibility for several migrants. For younger travellers on their OE Britain, and by extension Europe, was the ultimate destination. Rosa Tanga wanted to travel to England but could not afford the fare. She planned to work in Australia and move on to England in time for the 1991 Rugby World Cup.<sup>11</sup> A few young migrants aimed for more exotic destinations. Tim King and his flatmate applied in 1985 to volunteer in a refugee camp on the Thai–Cambodian border. On being

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<sup>8</sup> For oral history based accounts of these migrants see Hutching, *Long Journey for Sevenpence*; Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*.

<sup>9</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*, 96–121.

<sup>10</sup> Hutching, *Long Journey for Sevenpence*, 82.

<sup>11</sup> Tanga, interview.

declined Tim decided that since he was psychologically prepared for moving he might as well move to Australia.<sup>12</sup> For those considering permanent migration, Canada was a surprisingly common option. Migrants perceived it as a good place to live and bring up a family but were usually dissuaded by the cold winters. South Africa was warm but apartheid was a deterrent. Migrants often settled on Australia because it was a close, warm, affordable, and culturally similar destination.

Kiwi migrants' narratives reveal that decision-making dynamics depended on personal relationship situations. While there were exceptions, singles or childless couples made the decision to migrate quickly. Young singles were often impulsive, deciding to migrate almost instantly. Couples with children made the decision comparatively cautiously due to occasional conflicting views between partners and concerns about their children. Generally Kiwis' migration decisions were fairly painless. By contrast, A. James Hammerton's research on the gender dynamics of British couples' decisions to migrate to Australia found that the length and finality of the journey often made the decision 'epic' and conflicted.<sup>13</sup>

For young New Zealanders, the decision to migrate was usually straightforward. Most singles made their decision easily, on their own terms, and without any repercussions. Young unattached Kiwis were often influenced by others when deciding to leave New Zealand. While the motivation for migration was already present, the suggestion of another sparked them into action. For example, Ann Orre was a nursing student when she heard from friends in Australia:

*I got a phone call. I'd talked to these friends in Sydney from a phone box in the nursing home and they said, "We need a fourth person for this flat we're going to get. Do you want to come over?" And I think I just said "Yeah, yeah, I'll do that". So it was a fairly spur of the moment thing.*<sup>14</sup>

Many young migrants travelled in a pair or group. Jeanne Cashman came to Australia with three other girls:

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<sup>12</sup> Tim King, written narrative sent to author, 1 October 2009.

<sup>13</sup> A. James Hammerton, "'Family Comes First': Migrant Memory and Masculinity in Narratives of Post-War British Migrants," in *Speaking to Immigrants: Oral Testimony and the History of Australian Migration*, ed. A. James Hammerton and Eric Richards, *Visible Immigrants* (Canberra: History Program and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Ann Orre, interview by author, Christchurch, New Zealand, 16 February 2010.



*We [Jeanne and her friend] talked about it more seriously and then I mentioned it to a girl that worked downstairs from me and she said, "Oh I'd like to do that". And she had a friend in Auckland who would like to go too, so the four of us linked up.*<sup>15</sup>

A few young women even advertised in their local newspaper for a travelling companion. For both single and coupled young migrants, a lack of responsibility and dependents meant that decisions could be made quickly. While some young migrants took months to decide, the majority claimed it took only weeks, days, or even seconds. With younger couples, even when one partner was more eager to move than the other, the less enthusiastic party generally acquiesced fairly quickly.

Families with children required more time to negotiate their migration decision. Sometimes one partner was not in favour of migration. When Elizabeth O'Connor's husband needed to move to Australia to do further medical training she was unenthusiastic about taking the whole family to Melbourne: *'I thought "Why would anyone want to go to Australia?" I was initially unimpressed by the whole thing'*.<sup>16</sup> In a very small number of cases the decision almost led to a break-up. Cheryl Walkington recalled, *'My daughters and I did not want to come and our marriage went through a very rocky patch while we tried to make the right decision. In the end we all came as I decided to keep the family together'*.<sup>17</sup> But the majority of couples made the decision to migrate consensually and amicably. With families the decision-making process usually took a little longer. For example Vanessa Farrell's parents first considered migration to Australia in 1982. But Vanessa's Dad came home from a two week 'fact-finding mission' in Wollongong unimpressed with the Australian way of life. It was only six years later in 1988 that Vanessa's parents finally decided to move.<sup>18</sup> Even when both partners were enthusiastic about moving, variables such as school terms, selling a house, or family events could slow down the process.

A number of my respondents migrated to Australia as children or young people and they usually had little or no say in the decision. Trent Kimmer's family was unusual in that they held a democratic family vote around the Christmas dinner table. The result was three to two

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<sup>15</sup> Jeanne Cashman, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 13 April 2010.

<sup>16</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>17</sup> Cheryl Walkington, written narrative sent to author, 19 August 2009.

<sup>18</sup> Vanessa Farrell, written narrative sent to author, 26 September 2009.

in favour of the move and the family agreed to a two-year time frame.<sup>19</sup> In most families, the children had little direct influence in the decision-making process.

Another aspect of the decision-making process for migrants was resolving the intended duration of their time in Australia. Families, with more to lose and children to placate, sometimes took investigative trips to Australia before the move. Several, like Trent's family, put a time limit on their stay. Elizabeth Connor and her family originally only intended to stay in Melbourne for two years.<sup>20</sup> Older couples and families were also more likely to see themselves as permanent migrants. The majority of these more intentional migrants did not set a concrete time frame for their migration but rather expected to stay in Australia long-term. By contrast, younger migrants, especially those with travel-oriented motives often only intended to live in Australia for a limited time: a few weeks, months, or a year. Matthew O'Brien went to Australia with a friend on a whim, planning to 'have a look for three or four months'.<sup>21</sup> He ended up staying for decades. Like Matthew, many younger travellers never intended to permanently settle in Australia.

### ***Practical preparations***

Once the decision to leave New Zealand for Australia was confirmed, prospective migrants moved into the planning phase. Kiwi migrants needed to make arrangements at both the New Zealand and Australian ends. The time and energy devoted to these preparations varied greatly depending on migrants' circumstances and personal preferences. While some migrants spent months planning the logistics of the move, others merely purchased a plane ticket. Unsurprisingly, young single migrants tended to make few preparations while older migrants with dependents put more effort into organization. Kiwis' preparations were comparatively brief compared to migrants who journeyed over longer distances or in earlier time periods. Angela McCarthy describes how migrants from the United Kingdom in 1921–1965 needed to pass medical inspections, prearrange sponsors, visas and testimonial letters, and pack for the six week sea voyage as well as their new life.<sup>22</sup> Most Kiwis did not need to undertake any of these preparations.

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<sup>19</sup> Trent Kimme, written narrative sent to author, 11 August 2009.

<sup>20</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Matthew O'Brien, interview by author, Perth, WA, Australia, 2 July 2010.

<sup>22</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*, 72–9.

New Zealanders who moved to Australia took different amounts of time to prepare for the move. A few impulsive travellers were ready to leave in a few weeks, whereas more cautious families could take up to a year getting ready for departure. But the majority of travellers had a one to three month time period between making the decision and leaving. Migrants saved money for a ticket, packed, sold property, and organised travel arrangements in this relatively short amount of time.

The first step towards migration was saving up enough money for the air ticket and Australian living expenses. Unlike many other international migration movements, Kiwi migrants did not receive financial support from the Australian government or remittances from Australian kin for their migration. But moving to Australia was affordable for most New Zealanders. Older migrants tended to have greater financial resources and usually paid their travel expenses without any difficulty. Some younger migrants already had savings. John McNeil, who left in August 1965, was one of these:

*JM It was a lot more expensive than it is now. Fares have actually [come] down in real terms, when I look at the comparative values. I think from memory it was probably a couple of hundred dollars, around two hundred dollars to fly to Australia in those days...*

*RB So you had the money already?*

*JM I had the money because I was reasonably thrifty with money. I didn't throw it away. And I wasn't on a big salary but I was able to save ok. So it wasn't a strain financially.<sup>23</sup>*

Likewise, Benjamin Pittman who left New Zealand after several years working estimated that he had enough money to survive in Sydney without working for a year.<sup>24</sup> Most young people did need to save for a short time to cover migration expenses. They did holiday jobs in their study breaks or took on extra work. Raewyn Caporn worked three jobs for few months in order to save enough for the flights and a three month holiday.<sup>25</sup> Some sold their possessions to raise money. Anne Leers wrote, 'I talked my boyfriend into doing a 2yr working holiday round Aus, so I sold my horse and he sold his motorbike'.<sup>26</sup> Apart from the air ticket, the amount of money saved varied. Older migrants, with savings and profit from selling a house could have significant assets in the bank. Younger migrants tended to have anywhere from a

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<sup>23</sup> McNeil, interview.

<sup>24</sup> Pittman, interview.

<sup>25</sup> Raewyn Caporn, written narrative sent to author, 17 September 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Anne Leers, written narrative sent to author, 9 September 2009.

few hundred to a few thousand dollars. Some came with less; George Clarke moved to Sydney to work in the Newcastle steel works in 1969 with only 50 dollars in his pocket.<sup>27</sup>

Most migrants who owned a house in New Zealand ended up selling even if not immediately. Approximately two thirds put their homes on the market before leaving New Zealand. This suggests they expected their migration to be permanent. Sometimes when the market was unfavourable the house only sold after their departure for Australia. The other third rented out their home. Most did this as a precautionary measure and planned to sell once they definitely decided to stay in Australia. While some migrants ended up selling after only a few months in Australia, others held on for years. Madelaine Barry who migrated in June 1981 with her husband and three year old son thought their migration was only temporary. The family did not sell their house in Christchurch for eight years.<sup>28</sup> Most migrants did not seem particularly perturbed at selling their homes. The necessity of recouping significant financial investment meant that keeping their home was unrealistic. Many younger migrants did not own a house but instead rented, flatbed, or lived with parents. In their case it was a simple matter to give notice or farewell their family.

All migrants had to decide which possessions to bring with them and what to do with those they left behind. It was unusual for migrants to be able to bring over all their belongings. Some migrants whose transferral was paid for by their company or were better-off had all their possessions shipped over to Australia in a container. Tony Harris 'just got the packers in, packed the whole house and brought it all'.<sup>29</sup> Often young migrants owned very little and were able to leave New Zealand with only a suitcase and a few boxes. Alexander Clifton, who left New Zealand to do a Masters degree in Melbourne, had little to leave behind or take:

*Leaving Napier was basically a case of pack up a couple of suitcases and a box of stuff to be freighted over. I think it was two cardboard boxes or something like that. And that was pretty much all my worldly possessions: my photo albums, the few books I wanted to keep, a very few personal keepsakes ... I think the stereo was the most difficult thing to organise; packing up the stereo and taking that with me. So there wasn't a lot to leave behind really.*<sup>30</sup>

Some migrants were able to leave furniture and belongings stored with family in New Zealand. Diana Harlow was one such migrant:

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<sup>27</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Madelaine Barry, written narrative sent to author, 8 August 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Tony Harris, interview by author, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, 22 September 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Clifton, interview by author, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, 23 September 2010.

*Packed up a few things and I remember putting – in those days...instead of the cardboard packing boxes we had the old wooden tea chests – so I got some of them and I packed all my personal belongings into them and dumped them on my parents. And said, ‘When I’ve got a permanent address I want you to mail them over.’ I didn’t offer to pay for it (laughs).<sup>31</sup>*

Most New Zealanders had to compromise somewhere between the two extremes. While they purchased limited space in a container they also needed to dispose of some belongings.

Many migrants chose to take personal sentimental belongings to Australia, discarding larger household items. Alicia Matene migrated to Australia in 1986 with her husband and three children. She catalogued and packed the family’s photos and music. The family also took their good linen, books, New Zealand memorabilia/carvings, and computer. They sold their furniture, whiteware, and cars.<sup>32</sup> Most families tended to take similar items: family mementoes, linen, children’s toys, books, and paintings. Such items were rich in meaning but small enough to transport to Australia without much expense. Most New Zealanders sold their cars before leaving, although a few migrants had their precious vintage cars shipped across the Tasman. Large items of furniture were usually given away, left with family, or sold at garage sales.

The decision of what to take and what to leave behind created emotional, detailed memories for some narrators. Disposing of prized possessions could be painful, particularly for women. Toni Te Kowhai, who left Rotorua for Sydney in 1981, reflected on this experience:

*We’d hoped to have a garage sale but I just put an ad in the paper saying, “We have this type of furniture”. And because my husband had such a well paying job we had really nice stuff. And now, the thought of it, getting rid of it, became a bit of a nightmare because people would offer me things and I’d say, “Oh no, that’s not enough for this”. It was the sentimental value I was looking at and not really the value of the stuff that we had. So we ended up giving a lot of it away to family.<sup>33</sup>*

Just as Paul still mourned the loss of his yellow Mini, a number of migrants regretted having sold their possessions in later years. For example Beth Hall wrote that her family had ‘been advised by well meaning individuals to not arrange for our furniture to be taken. We received little for it at garage sales sadly – and it took years to be able to afford furniture like we had in NZ’.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Diana Harlow, interview by author, Melbourne, Vic, Australia, 13 December 2009.

<sup>32</sup> Alicia Matene, written narrative sent to author, 30 November 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Toni Te Kowhai, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 18 April 2010.

<sup>34</sup> Hall, written narrative.

Another important possession for some migrants was their pet. Quite a few migrants ensured they could take their dog or cat to Australia. Kate Master's family sent over their dog a week early and had him put in boarding kennels.<sup>35</sup> John Husband came to Australia with his family as a teenager in 1967. They were able to bring their two cats as luggage in the baggage hold of the plane. Pets were often a priority. Trina Campano recalled, '*I wanted to make sure that we were definitely taking our dog and that was the only thing that concerned me*'.<sup>36</sup> Janet Blair made few preparations except to organise transporting her dog: 'The only arrangements I made were for my dog who had to follow on a different flight, then go into quarantine for 3 days. He needed vaccinations & hydatid treatment before leaving, then I arranged for him to travel by train to Armidale after his quarantine period'.<sup>37</sup> Beloved pets were a member of the family; for migrants who brought them to Australia they supplied company and a sense of continuity.

The most common preparations made at the Australian end were pre-organising work and accommodation. Migrants who moved for career or educational reasons often made sure their new job or study plans were confirmed before arrival in Australia. Indeed, Kiwis migrating to Australia with a company transfer or postgraduate scholarship moved on the condition of an existing offer. Men in particular often applied for Australian jobs before leaving New Zealand. Radio presenter Mike Gammon wrote, 'I sent off air-checks of my work to all the major city radio stations and it was Perth that offered me a job. This is the only reason I came to Perth'.<sup>38</sup> Helen Pemberton's husband researched employment advertisements in *The West Australian* newspaper at their local library and wrote to chartered accountants offices in Perth.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, quite a few migrants pre-organised accommodation. Very few bought houses prior to migration. Rather they arranged to stay with Australian-based kin or booked a few weeks at a motel, hotel, or flat.

The degree of preparation varied greatly. A few men came to Australia some time before the rest of their family in order to find work and accommodation. John O'Dwyer arrived in Australia before his wife and children but in hindsight regretted his decision:

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<sup>35</sup> Kate Master, written narrative sent to author, 15 September 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Trina Campano, interview by author, Auckland, New Zealand, 6 November 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Janet Blair, written narrative sent to author, 28 August 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Mike Gammon. written narrative sent to author, 19 September 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Helen Pemberton, written narrative sent to author, 16 September 2009.

We agreed that I should come to Perth, get a job and a house etc, and pave the way for Sally and the children to follow later. This was a hell of a mistake. Families should pitch into the adventures and the highs and the lows together. I had no idea when I would see them again and was constantly aware that I was separated from them at a time when they were at the ages of being very dependent on me, 13, 11, 7. Words cannot describe how I missed them; the separation gave me great anguish.<sup>40</sup>

A few like the Tidswell family researched Australia from New Zealand:

We looked up job advertisements in Brisbane newspapers at the Wellington library, looked at house prices and generally tried to get an indication of what was going on in Brisbane at the time. We checked with the Australian High Commission about social security entitlements and discovered we couldn't get any assistance until we'd been there for six months. We calculated a weekly budget and transferred enough money to ensure that we could live for six months on no income if necessary.<sup>41</sup>

Such attention to detail was unusual. Many migrants focused only on finding work and temporary accommodation. Indeed, young migrants often made no preparations before arriving in Australia. Instead they stayed with contacts in Australia and relied on their own initiative to find work. David St George stated, 'I made little arrangements before I left. I preferred to be able to 'wing it''.<sup>42</sup> Migrants who visited Australia as part of their OE intended to tour around the country anyway so preferred to leave their schedule open-ended.

### ***Families' and friends' emotional responses to migration***

In addition to practical preparations, Kiwi migrants also had to deal with families' and friends' emotional responses to their migration decision. Families' attitudes in particular made a big difference to the leaving process and impacted on migrants' own emotional state. This beforehand time was a period of emotional adjustment and farewells for many migrants, particularly those who intended to migrate permanently.

In migrants' descriptions of their families' reactions to their migration, there is an even split of positive and negative responses. The range and quality of these emotional responses varied greatly. Negative responses ranged from initial shock to emotional blackmail. Positive responses ranged from disinterested acceptance to enthusiasm. Moreover a number of migrants described their families as simultaneously supportive and upset. When migrants recalled their families' responses they mentioned their parents' feelings most often, followed by siblings. Many younger migrants still lived with their parents. And older migrants with

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<sup>40</sup> John O'Dwyer, written narrative sent to author, 1 October 2009.

<sup>41</sup> Warwick Tidswell, written narrative sent to author, 17 August 2009.

<sup>42</sup> David St George, written narrative sent to author, 20 October 2009.

children found their parents were dismayed at losing access to their grandchildren. Migrants' parents tended to respond more negatively than siblings, who were often planning to travel themselves.

The first reason migrants' parents, especially mothers, responded negatively to migration was the prospect of missing their children and grandchildren. Kate Master's mother was upset about her daughter moving away as they were very close.<sup>43</sup> When Peter Potaka left the Hawke's Bay in 1973 with his wife he was the first of his immediate family and hapu (sub tribe) to move overseas. Australia was seen as being a long way away:

PP        ... Yeah, my Mum wasn't happy about it.

RB        Did she tell you?

PP        Oh yeah. "Why do you have to go there? What's wrong with here?" You know, mothers still say that stuff.<sup>44</sup>

George Clarke's mother was also upset at him leaving his network of Māori family:

*I think it's part and parcel of the close family network Māoris have. I mean in the country they always have, when you have a wedding or a funeral, everyone comes to the marae and helps out. And that has been entrenched in her [his mother] all her life. And she wanted that to continue.*<sup>45</sup>

The prospect of losing regular time with grandchildren also upset migrants' parents. Jo Barker wrote, 'My family were very upset initially by the decision as my son was the only English speaking grandchild – (my sister's children spoke only Danish at that point) and they felt Perth was a long way from NZ'.<sup>46</sup> Indeed a few migrants in my study were actually grandparents moving to Australia in order to be near grandchildren.

For some New Zealanders preparing to move to Australia, their parents' negative reactions were an extension of already damaged relationships. As with Paul's mother, some parents took their child's decision to leave as a personal affront. In these situations events could turn nasty. Jeanne Cashman's relationship with her mother was fraught with difficulty as her mother strongly disapproved of her Catholic boyfriend. The unhappy relationship was a

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<sup>43</sup> Master, written narrative.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Potaka, interview by author, Wellington, New Zealand, 20 May 2010.

<sup>45</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>46</sup> Jo Barker, written narrative sent to author, 17 September 2009.



factor in Jeanne leaving New Zealand. When Jeanne broke the news to her mother that she was moving to Australia chaos ensued:

*RB        How did it go when you told your family and your Mum about moving?*

*JC        Didn't go down well. In fact my last six weeks living in New Zealand were hell. I think we had a couple of episodes of Mum overdosing and things like that. But I think after the first time you go through one of those experiences as a child you get a bit immune to it. But she did hurl abuse at me and that a lot. It wasn't a nice place.<sup>47</sup>*

Sue Neilson's desire to escape her father was further reinforced by his response to her migration plans:

One huge motivating factor was my father who wanted us to buy a house in Flaxmere (new suburb) and 'settle down'! We scarpered. He was very angry and told us to go but leave the baby behind and 'get it out of our systems'. We didn't leave the baby of course.<sup>48</sup>

Such responses were indicative of already troubled relationships and long-term familial disharmony. Abusive parental responses only strengthened migrants' determination to leave. Fortunately such situations were few and far between.

Parents might also be unhappy if they considered migration a poor decision on their children's part. For example Lesley Ngatai's Mum was angry that she dropped out of university to go to Australia.<sup>49</sup> Marie Reichner's family disapproved of her travelling companion to Australia although they ultimately supported her:

My mother and grandparents were horrified, but mostly because they didn't like my boyfriend and wondered what he was dragging me to another country for. They were however kind enough to lend me \$1000 as I did not really have any money to take with me.<sup>50</sup>

Valerie Jenner's family disapproved because 'generally speaking Aussies were not admired by my family'.<sup>51</sup> Other parents felt that their children were giving up a good job or would be unable to find work in Australia.

Not only migrants' parents were upset; a few siblings, friends and children were dismayed by migrants' move to Australia. Annette Moody's youngest sister was 'devastated' when she left: *'She had this yellow plastic bangle and she kind of wrapped it up in some pretty paper*

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<sup>47</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Sue Neilson, written narrative sent to author, 2 November 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Lesley Ngatai, written narrative sent to author, 4 October 2009.

<sup>50</sup> Reichner, written narrative.

<sup>51</sup> Valerie Jenner, written narrative sent to author, 16 October 2009.

and gave it to me and burst into tears, “Will I ever see you again?””<sup>52</sup> Rosa Tanga’s siblings all thought that she was ‘mad’ and unlikely to last in Australia: ‘*Most of my NZ family [6 brothers and a sister] had not been supportive of my decision to go to Australia. I think the general consensus was that I would be back before Christmas.*’<sup>53</sup> A very small number of migrants’ friends were negative but their opposition was generally ignored. The most difficult resistance for migrants came from their own children who were of course greatly affected by the move. Ceris Nieuwland migrated to Australia with her family when she was only three years old. Although she was too young to mind her older brother did not want to come to Australia:

*My oldest brother, he was the oldest when we came over here. So I think in a way it probably would have been hardest for him because I think he was in his last stages of primary school. And so that’s a kind of difficult age in life anyway you know. And so we came over – and he was very much into rugby in New Zealand and he had his friends and everything – so it was hard for him. I know he wasn’t impressed about moving at all.*<sup>54</sup>

For those migrating as parents it was important that their family settle happily, so unwilling children were an additional source of worry. Most families went ahead nonetheless because they believed moving to Australia would grant their children greater opportunities.

For every negative response in my sample there was a positive or accepting one. Many migrants’ parents understood why their children were migrating. Younger migrants’ friends had no issues as international travel was a common, even expected, rite of passage. And some children were excited rather than apprehensive about living in Australia.

Many migrants’ parents supported their children’s reasons for migration. Christine Reis moved to Melbourne aged 21 in 1980 with her parents’ encouragement:

I gave it some thought and talked to Mum and Dad about it. Their response was that life in Christchurch wasn’t exactly exciting for a young person and that I had nothing to lose. The bottom line was I had their support and that if it didn’t work out I could always go home.<sup>55</sup>

Christine’s father who was a jeweller made her a gold ingot as a safety net, to sell for a return fare if needed. Other parents understood that greater job opportunities in Australia were a strong incentive to move. A number of parents supported their children’s move to Australia because they understood the desire to travel. Hayley Lambie was apprehensive about telling

<sup>52</sup> Annette Moody, interview by author, Auckland, New Zealand, 5 November 2010.

<sup>53</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>54</sup> Ceris Nieuwland, interview by author, Perth, WA, Australia, 1 July 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Reis, written narrative.

her mother about moving to Perth. However, when told, Hayley's mother 'said that it was all fine and that she had brought it on herself as she had always encouraged us to travel and see the world!'<sup>56</sup> Parents who had travelled themselves in their youth tended to be supportive. Benjamin Pittman's family had a long tradition of working in Australia so '*nobody really raised an eyelid at all*'.<sup>57</sup>

In several cases parents actively encouraged their children's migration as they felt it was in their best interests. Shirley McNicol's mother persuaded her daughter to escape her abusive husband by migrating to Australia:

My mother made the decision for me to leave NZ & come to Australia. She came to me one afternoon in August 1980. Put \$1000 in front of me and said, "I want you to go to Australia and make a good life for you and your son". I could see the look in my mother's eyes that what she had just said was very important to her. It was important to her for me to listen & take her advice. She knew that if I didn't leave NZ I would return to my son's father then endure a horrible life with him again.<sup>58</sup>

When young New Zealanders were travelling to Australia for specific educational reasons their families were often proud and excited on their behalf. Mildred Royce, who moved to attend a Seventh Day Adventist university, felt a little embarrassed with so much support: '*They were all quite proud. Actually I was embarrassed because they all wanted me to do well and go over and enjoy myself. So yeah, I found that a lot of people actually – particularly the family – got together and donated little things like money*'.<sup>59</sup> Many parents were able to put their own sadness at losing their children behind them and instead focus on their children's desires. Sally Healey remembered her mother's attitude fondly: 'She was so gracious about it and said that I had to go where my husband wanted to go'.<sup>60</sup> This type of attitude made the leaving process much more pleasant for all involved.

In some cases, parents and other family were less upset because their children had already spent time away from home or because their relationships were more distant. For example, in the previous chapter's story, Frank's family were unperturbed about his move to Melbourne because he had already spent time in Manapouri. Stephen Walton who left New Zealand aged 21 in 1975 wrote: 'I am not sure it was a huge impact on my parents (although they probably

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<sup>56</sup> Hayley Lambie, written narrative sent to author, 1 September 2009.

<sup>57</sup> Pittman, interview.

<sup>58</sup> Shirley McNicol, written narrative sent to author, 12 October 2009.

<sup>59</sup> Royce, interview.

<sup>60</sup> Sally Healey, written narrative sent to author, 14 September 2009.

missed me). I had not lived with them since I was 17 years old and I think they were used to me not being around.’<sup>61</sup> Parents also tended to be more accepting when they had other children or family who were already overseas. For example, Liz Brodie, who moved to Australia in 1967 as a 21 year old, recalled:

*RB        How did your family take it?*

*LB        Oh they were all right. They were ok. I had one brother overseas anyway in London at that stage and my other brother had been to England and come back with an English bride. And so they were quite accustomed ... we were never tied to anyone’s apron strings. We were all independent souls.*<sup>62</sup>

Indeed a few families had been brought up to be independent. The most extreme example was Matthew Clements who came from a Christchurch family with 13 children. His parents encouraged their children to travel and ‘*do our own thing.*’ As a result none of the children live in Christchurch and only three are still in New Zealand.<sup>63</sup> Families raised with the expectation of travel and migration found the process less emotionally difficult.

Friends and siblings were usually positive about New Zealand migrants’ plans as they understood the desire to travel. Beth Cullen wrote ‘it was the general ambition of my peers and many in my age group at that time to ‘see the world’’.<sup>64</sup> Sometimes migrants’ friends were jealous or challenged by the decision. Wikitoria Smith was in her early 30s when she left her four children behind with family in New Zealand ‘to get my act together in Oz’. Her friends were shocked: ‘quite a few of my friends had been talking about doing it for so long while I hadn’t, and yet I was the one going. It made them realise that they could have made it happen long ago’.<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth Burton migrated with her parents and brother to Australia aged 16. She recalled that her friends were envious as Australia was seen to be a more exciting place to live.<sup>66</sup> Some friends and siblings had already travelled themselves so understood migrants’ motives. Jennifer Cooper and her husband Bob moved to Perth so Bob could do a geology PhD. Jennifer’s brother had just returned from doing his own PhD in Toronto and their friends also planned to travel:

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<sup>61</sup> Stephen Walton, written narrative sent to author, 10 October 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Liz Brodie, interview by author, Sydney, NSW, Australia, 14 April 2010.

<sup>63</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>64</sup> Beth Cullen, written narrative sent to author, 1 October 2009.

<sup>65</sup> Wikitoria Smith, written narrative sent to author, 14 September 2009.

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Burton, written narrative sent to author, 17 September 2009.

*Most of our friends – remember we were at university – this is what happened. People did go overseas. So it was probably more surprising if you stayed at home in some ways. I mean obviously some people went and got jobs locally. But it was a given thing that it's just as likely you would be going overseas.*<sup>67</sup>

This attitude was a reflection of the general cultural shift during the 1960s to 1990s where an overseas experience was seen as normal, even necessary, due to affordable global travel, increased information flows, and a youth culture which valued exploration and multiculturalism.

## Departure

### *Saying goodbye*

Farewells like so many other aspects of the leaving process were affected by migrants' relationship dynamics and feelings about migration. New Zealanders with large kinship and friendship networks often held farewell parties. Alicia Matene and her husband Willie had a huge social network in Tokoroa made up of Alicia's softball club, netball team, Nga Tai Tamariki o Tokoroa Māori culture group, as well as their work colleagues, old school friends and family:

We hired the local rugby club and invited everyone in town; put on the food and refreshments and had a great get together. The day started early with a mixed netball game followed by a Nga Manu past and present softball match. A good friend offered his DJ services and the culture group provided a fantastic floorshow which incorporated the junior, intermediate, and senior groups. We ate, danced, sang, drank, had lots of speeches. There were lots of tears and an abundance of Kiwi memorabilia (in case we forgot our roots) and farewell gifts. We felt so loved and missed already.<sup>68</sup>

David Cavanagh from Invercargill enjoyed a riotous party which continued through the night until the morning of his departure. His mates capped off the event by pulling brown eyes as he walked out to the plane. Eventually police were called to the airport to discipline the unruly crowd.<sup>69</sup> Some migrants' workplaces put on farewells. Trina Campano and her husband Tony had two work farewells. One was a blokes-only event whereas the other was more family friendly:

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<sup>67</sup> Jennifer Cooper, interview by author, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 12 November 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Matene, written narrative.

<sup>69</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

*He'd had a formal farewell in Napier where he was working – and he had a stripper. But we did have a corporate farewell which was really really nice. And we were given a really nice gift that lives on this day and just really nice things were said.*<sup>70</sup>

Most migrants tended to have a series of smaller get-togethers with family and friends before leaving. Jeanne Cashman, who was migrating partly to escape her controlling mother, was stressed out by her mother's wish for a family portrait before she left. After leaving her mother Jeanne travelled to Auckland where she said goodbye to her brother and then met up with her travelling companions at the airport.<sup>71</sup> Parents and a few siblings often came to the airport or port to say a final goodbye. This was an emotional time for migrants.

Farewells were particularly difficult for migrants who worried about the family they were leaving behind, or who were moving at another's behest. Women in particular found leaving loved ones a difficult emotional experience. Annette Schnack was worried about deserting her aging parents.<sup>72</sup> For Sally Healey, saying goodbye to her mother, who had been so gracious about the migration 'was one of the hardest things I had ever done'.<sup>73</sup> Jeanne Cashman had mixed feelings. She was happy to be escaping her difficult mother but still had feelings for her ex-boyfriend.<sup>74</sup> For Simon Gower and his wife, leaving behind both their large close families was 'quite a wrench'.<sup>75</sup> For those who were not migrating by choice, departure was particularly upsetting. Jinene Morgan, who migrated to Brisbane with her parents, was an unwilling participant: 'I had just completed Form 5 and was desperate to stay in NZ to be with my friends'.<sup>76</sup> Elizabeth O'Connor who was reluctantly moving to Melbourne with her young family so her husband could do further medical training was very worried prior to the flight:

*I remember the night before I didn't sleep a wink. I stayed awake the whole night. I wrote a letter to our very close friends in the Hawke's Bay and I did not sleep. I just stayed awake. Because it was the six am flight; the flight from hell ... I was so stressed I couldn't sleep. But I wasn't actually stressed, I'd gone beyond stress. I was actually very calm. So I was just flat-lining really...But inside I was just screaming, "Oh my God, What are we doing here?"*<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>71</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Annette Schnack, written narrative sent to author, 29 September 2009.

<sup>73</sup> Healey, written narrative.

<sup>74</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>75</sup> Simon Gower, written narrative sent to author, 26 October 2009.

<sup>76</sup> Jinene Morgan, written narrative sent to author, 24 September 2009.

<sup>77</sup> O'Connor, interview.

The final farewell at the airport was often a difficult time as it brought home the reality of the move. Wendy Bull experienced a mixture of emotions when she departed from Hamilton in 1971:

I recall the family were at the airport – it was quite a big deal to fly – even back in 1971. There were many tears shed but we looked forward to it with much enthusiasm (even though I cried most of the way over).<sup>78</sup>

Leaving loved family members and friends was a difficult experience, especially for those who were apprehensive about migration.

But a considerable number of migrants felt only excitement and anticipation at the prospect of leaving New Zealand for Australia. Matthew O'Brien, who travelled to Australia in 1990 with a friend for a working holiday, reflected that he was oblivious to his parents' feelings: '*I didn't really think how it would affect the people around me. I was just keen to have a good time*'.<sup>79</sup> For others, such as Paul, leaving behind a messy family situation entailed a sense of relief. Quite a few migrants, especially younger travellers, were excited about the start of a new adventure. John Husband knew he would miss his family friends but closer to the date he and his siblings found themselves more eager than upset:

*But the excitement of coming to Australia overtook us from what we really wanted ... sort of above and beyond what we'd sort of been expecting. "Wow, we're going to Australia! Wow that's pretty neat!" And it was all sort of rosy and everything's looking good.*<sup>80</sup>

Especially for those who were unclear as to how long they would be away from New Zealand, moving to Australia was seen as starting something new rather than leaving New Zealand behind.

### ***Crossing the Tasman***

The final stage of leaving was the trip over to Australia. Some migrants travelled to Australia by ship. This form of transport was common in the late 1960s, less so in the 1970s and ceased in the 1980s. By ship the journey to Australia usually took about three days. Migrants might then stay on board longer if they did not disembark at the first Australian port. Especially in the late 1960s, many migrants chose to travel by ship as it was cheaper and provided more

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<sup>78</sup> Wendy Bull, written narrative sent to author, 17 August 2009.

<sup>79</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>80</sup> Husband, interview.

luggage allowance than air travel. Frank Pawson recalled that he paid about 500 dollars to cover a fare for two adults, two children and 12 tea chests in 1968 on the *Angelina Lauro*.<sup>81</sup>

Most migrants accurately remembered the name of their vessel: the *Oronsay*, *TSS Fedor Shalyapin*, *Angelina Lauro*, *Achille Lauro*, *Galileo Galilei*, *Oriana*, *Oriental Queen* and *Southern Cross*. Many of these ships were built in the years immediately after the end of World War II. For example, the *Achille Lauro* (the ship most commonly recalled by migrants) was



**Figure 13. The *Angelina Lauro*'s last visit to Sydney on 17 May 1972. Photo by Reuben Goossens.**  
<http://www.ssmaritime.com/achillelauro.htm> (accessed 14 September 2010).

completed in 1947. Originally known as the *Willem Ruys*, in 1964, due to poor passenger loadings, the ship was laid up in Rotterdam. The *William Ruys* was then sold, along with her running mate the *Oranje*, to the Italian Flotta Lauro Lines. In January 1965, *Willem Ruys* was renamed *Achille Lauro* and *Oranje* was renamed *Angelina Lauro*. In 1966 *Achille Lauro* departed Genoa heading for Sydney, Australia, continuing on to Wellington, New Zealand. She remained on this service for six years but then due to a lack of passengers was withdrawn from service and was changed into a cruise liner.<sup>82</sup> Most Australian-bound ships departed from Wellington although one narrator recalled boarding in Lyttelton.

Many of the ships were managed and staffed by 'foreigners'. The *Oriental Queen* was Japanese; the *Galileo*, *Achille Lauro* and *Angelina Lauro* were Italian, and the *Fedor Shalyapin* was Russian. Foreign 'exotic' ships helped made the trip interesting. Lesley Ngatai recalled travelling on one of the last CTC Line Russian ships in 1979: 'The Russian women seemed very severe (later I found out why – it was the final leg of a cruise and full of

<sup>81</sup> Frank Pawson, email correspondence with author, 23 January 2012.

<sup>82</sup> Reuben Goossens, "Archille Lauro Ex Willem Ruys," <http://www.ssmaritime.com/achillelauro.htm> (accessed 14 September 2010).



Australian guys who drank, hit on them and threw up in the hallways)'.<sup>83</sup> For Colleen Szabo, her trip on the Russian *Fedor Shalyapin* was memorable since her husband was a Hungarian



**Figure 14. Colleen Szabo's husband and four children. Photo taken shortly before their migration to Perth in 1974. Courtesy of Colleen Szabo.**

refugee but also because it provided a break:

*Jon kind of freaked out because it was Russian people and staff and he'd escaped all that. So he was very nervous but he settled down. And it was very comfortable and they looked after us well. They even took away the little kids' underwear that needed mending and did the mending and brought it back. It was a lovely trip.*<sup>84</sup>

Margaret Sale on the *Galileo* found that the crew could not understand English and she had to communicate with them through gestures.<sup>85</sup>

While some ship-going migrants fondly remembered the on-board entertainment others' overriding recollection was of seasickness. Valerie Jenner, who took a P&O liner in 1974, had her New Years on board ship. It was an 'endless party'.<sup>86</sup> Lesley Ngatai was amazed by the 'grand staircase, library and red and gold everywhere' on her Russian ship.<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately seasickness was also common as the Tasman Sea could be rough. Barry Hartley who travelled on the *Oriental Queen* in 1969 was ill for most of the four day voyage.<sup>88</sup> Frank Pawson and his family also had a tough crossing:

*The first night at sea was incredible and then, the second or third day the Tasman has a very bad habit of getting a huge swell in it. And this Angelina Lauro was – I don't know when it was originally built – but it was supposed to have stabilisers on it. And I'm a good sailor, so it didn't really worry me too much. But my wife was sick. One son, the eldest son, was terribly sick. Half the crew, you couldn't find them, they were too sick.*<sup>89</sup>

In spite of his seasickness Frank and his family still enjoyed their time on board ship. He felt there was a happy atmosphere as many of his shipmates were excited to be leaving New Zealand.

Although those New Zealand migrants who crossed the Tasman by ship did generally enjoy the experience, the duration of the trip was too short for significant on-board romances,

<sup>83</sup> Ngatai, written narrative.

<sup>84</sup> Colleen Szabo, interview by author, Brisbane, QLD, Australia, 20 September 2010.

<sup>85</sup> Margaret Sale, written narrative sent to author, 30 September 2009.

<sup>86</sup> Jenner, written narrative.

<sup>87</sup> Ngatai, written narrative.

<sup>88</sup> Barry Hartley, written narrative sent to author, 31 August 2009.

<sup>89</sup> Pawson, interview.

friendships, relaxation and sightseeing. In comparison to other migrants to Australia such as ‘ten-pound Poms’ who took many weeks via ship to arrive, New Zealanders travel experiences were a relatively unimportant facet of their migration story.

Most of the migrants in my sample travelled to Australia by plane. A very few were excited or nervous as it was their first international flight. Several migrants flew soon after the 1979 Erebus disaster and 1986 Challenger space shuttle explosion which naturally made them somewhat apprehensive. Migrants flew on Teal (the forerunner to Air New Zealand), Air New Zealand or Qantas airlines. A few migrants recalled the type of plane on which they flew. In 1966 Graeme Shirley flew on a ‘four cylinder prop aeroplane’.<sup>90</sup> John Wellborne crossed the Tasman in 1969 on the Qantas ‘V’ jet.<sup>91</sup> Several narrators recalled flying on a Lockheed Electra aeroplane in 1966–7.<sup>92</sup> The Jellick family travelled on a DC10 plane in 1979.<sup>93</sup> Most migrants had few memories of what they did on the plane. The most notable exception to this was Grant Curtin and his wife’s flight from America to Australia. While on the plane the Curtins joined the ‘mile high club’ and conceived their second child!<sup>94</sup> Kiwi migrants, especially when flying from New Zealand to Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne, were on the plane for a relatively short time. Flying to Perth took longer, especially in the earlier years, but was often split across a couple of days. Many of the migrants had flown before. This combined with the short duration of travel meant most migrants did not consider the plane trip a particularly remarkable experience.

## Conclusions

This chapter re-emphasises that relationships, in particular those with family, were an important part of the migration experience. Relationships affected leaving experiences in two key ways. Firstly, New Zealand migrants’ leaving preparations differed greatly depending on their own relationship status. Single young Kiwis, eager to start their OE or find work in Australia, often left without a backward glance. Their preparations were minimal and speedy. Older couples with families had to grapple with breaking up an established home, discarding loved possessions, and placating upset children and grandparents. As a result, migrants with

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<sup>90</sup> Shirley, interview.

<sup>91</sup> Wellborne, written narrative.

<sup>92</sup> Brodie, interview. Mitchell McCormack, written narrative sent to author, 15 October 2009.

<sup>93</sup> Joyce Jellick, written narrative sent to author, 8 June 2010.

<sup>94</sup> Grant Curtin, interview by author, Whitecliffs, Canterbury, New Zealand, 17 November 2010.

stronger ties to New Zealand generally made their decision more cautiously and with greater foresight and planning.

Secondly, the way families and friends reacted to migrants' plans to move across the Tasman made a great difference to the tenor of the leaving period. Fervent opposition made migrants unhappy but ultimately more determined to leave. Support eased the planning process but could result in last minute grief at leaving loved ones behind. It was uncommon for narrators' families to provide unequivocally positive and negative reactions. Rather, kinship responses were often complex; a combination of well-wishing and grief. Mixed reactions made leaving a bittersweet experience. Even migrants who left without a backward glance reflected in later years how hard it must have been for their families to farewell loved ones. The decision to move to Australia had significant consequences not only for migrants but also for their networks of family and friends in New Zealand. Indeed, as future chapters reveal, distance from friends and family did not necessarily become any easier after migration. Sometimes it was only years later that migrants realised how migration had impacted their relationships with those left behind in New Zealand.

The majority of New Zealanders moving to Australia had fewer preparations to make compared to other international migrants. Australia's closeness, lack of entry restrictions, and cultural similarities made the move relatively easy. Many New Zealand migrants, even those with families, organised their move from start to finish in a few months. In addition, as the previous chapter highlighted, most Kiwis had at least one contact in Australia. These transnational connections helped organise accommodation and work for the new migrants. The trip across the Tasman, even by ship, was generally uneventful and did not form a key part of migrants' narratives.

Preparations were often brief because some New Zealanders did not expect their move to be permanent. Accidental migrants in particular had no idea that they would not return. They left possessions behind with family or kept their family homes. For these Kiwis, migration was an evolving reality rather than a firm decision. While some New Zealanders did mentally class themselves as migrants settling in a foreign land, others were unprepared for the new experiences that settling in Australia would bring.

## Chapter Five: A New Land

Toni Te Kowhai grew up in Rotorua. Although she never learnt to speak Te Reo, her childhood years centred around her local marae. But while she valued her Māori heritage she became frustrated with her cultural context. She observed that Māori women in Rotorua caused less trouble and were more educated than the men, yet were forbidden from speaking on the marae and were passed over for jobs. Toni also felt claustrophobic and stifled by her husband's large family. So she decided to escape, hoping to make a new start in Australia. In November 1981, Toni, aged 19, together with her husband and son, arrived in Sydney. She was a very fluent narrator with clear memories of her arrival in Australia.



**Figure 15. Toni Te Kowhai at her home in Sydney, 2010. Photo by author.**

*We arrived and it was so hot. Our suitcases were a present from his [her husband's] league team at a farewell the week before we'd left. And they were such cheap rubbish that they actually broke while they were in the hold of the plane. And ... all our clothes came out, underwear and all, on the conveyor belt. Yes, it wasn't a nice way to arrive (laughs).*

*Our friends were there. They had come to pick us up, and I thought how hot it was. Yeah, I was really hot. And the buildings were really old coming from the airport itself. I was looking out of the window thinking, "It's really old. The buildings are really old". It was like something off TV. I didn't have any preconceived ideas about what it was I was coming to; only that I was leaving home and coming to the big city. My neck hurt from staring up at how high the buildings were. And you know, it was absolute culture shock. Although it was really exciting. For me it was an adventure. I was only 19 years old and there was so much to look forward to.*

*When I went for my first job before I actually got that position at TAFE [NSW Technical and Further Education Commission], I remember ringing a place for an interview and they said to me, "Oh, you've got a New Zealand accent". I said, "Yeah". And they said, "Well we don't employ New Zealanders here". I thought, "What the heck? What is that about?" As I was to find out later a lot of the Māoris that had been here for the years preceding the 80s had had a habit of coming here, working, buying a whole lot of stuff, and then going home and just leaving their jobs. And so people were unsure of how long you were actually going to stay. So New Zealanders became untrustworthy.*

*We moved a lot. I mean that was the great thing about renting places. I could actually afford to move all over the place. We left Kogarah which seemed to be an old people's home and came out west to Parramatta which is a young people's place. I had no idea just how big Australia was at all you know. When I consider that our whole population from New Zealand can fit in Sydney, it seems bizarre. And Sydney can be such an awful concrete jungle compared to how beautiful it is at home.*

*So it was very hot. The climate was just terrible when I first got here. It was not unknown to be round 44 degrees. And not being a person who ever had air conditioning, I was walking round with a wet towel over my head for one whole summer I think, just to get some relief ... And when I got here it was the strange smells and the different restaurants. I really loved the variety of food. As much as I love having pork bones and watercress, when I first got here I thought, "I'm never gonna have sausages or mince again". Because that's all we had at home. I was in a climate where I was quite happy to have a salad (laughs).<sup>1</sup>*

Toni's narrative highlights a number of themes explored in this chapter. Her account includes her immediate sensory impressions of Australia, in particular the heat of the Australian climate, and the newness of Sydney's big city environment. She describes being discriminated against for being a New Zealander. Her story also gives a sense of her ongoing adaptation to Australian climate and society.

After arriving in Australia most Kiwi migrants experienced Australia as a foreign landscape and society, but soon adapted to their new country. During their initial interactions with the Australian people and environment many Kiwi migrants experienced a sense of disconnection. Australian weather, habitats and living spaces were unfamiliar. Australians spoke differently and at times behaved in foreign ways. Instead of slotting in seamlessly, Kiwis found themselves identified as newcomers. Culture shock is generally too strong a term for these experiences of difference. Kiwis' responses to Australia's unfamiliar aspects were diverse and not always negative. While some Kiwis found their new surroundings uncomfortable, others fell in love with Australia. In addition, New Zealanders' experiences of difference were usually mild, temporary, and easily overcome. In fact the term 'cultural surprise' describes New Zealand migrants' feelings more accurately than 'culture shock'. Few Kiwis expected to encounter cultural differences, and were startled when they occurred. However, in a short space of time, most New Zealanders settled in to Australia, becoming silent migrants. Kiwis were generally indistinguishable as new migrants, found work easily, and did not live in migrant enclaves. In spite of their easy acculturation, many Kiwi migrants continued to feel that Australian society contained some underlying differences to New Zealand society, particularly in its treatment of Aboriginal Australians.

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<sup>1</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

## Sensory memories of arrival

New Zealanders' strongest memories of Australia's differences often revolved around their first sensory experiences.<sup>2</sup> Sensory memory can trigger powerful recollections of specific events. Often a smell, taste, or image acts as a cue, drawing out associated memories. Daniel Schacter argues that although sensory memories are fragile they can reappear with a startling vividness after remaining dormant for years.<sup>3</sup> Indeed some oral historians use sensory objects such as photos, recordings, and scents in interviews to spark narrators' recollections.<sup>4</sup> For New Zealand migrants to Australia, the first few moments after disembarking from the plane were still clear. Sensations associated with migrants' first encounters with a new climate and multicultural urban society also provided strong memories. The longevity of these sensory memories confirms that aspects of Australia were foreign to New Zealanders. Memory research states that sensory information taken in will almost certainly fade quickly with time if it is not treated consciously.<sup>5</sup> Kiwi migrants to Australia retain their sensory memories because at the time of arrival they consciously noticed and internally catalogued novel sensations.

The journey from New Zealand to Australia by plane was fleeting with little sensory stimulus. An aeroplane flight is an artificial experience distinguished by bland food, air conditioning, thrumming engines, and limited visual interest. Emerging from the plane into Australia partly occasioned vivid sensory memories because of the stark contrast between the two environments. The experience of stepping out into Australia's heat proved unforgettable. Jonathan Archer recalled arriving in Sydney:

*I got off the plane and I remember walking down the stairs and they were behind the wing. Walked down the stairs and thought, "Gee there's a hell of a lot of heat coming from the*

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<sup>2</sup> This is a trend common amongst migrant narratives. For example, interviews with Jewish women who migrated to Australia during World War Two exposed their senses as 'the strongest vessels of memory'. Michele Langfield and Pam McLean, "'But Pineapple I'm Still a Bit Wary Of': Sensory Memories of Jewish Women Who Migrated to Australia as Children, 1938–39," in *Speaking to Immigrants: Oral Testimony and the History of Australian Migration*, ed. A. James Hammerton and Eric Richards, *Visible Immigrants* (Canberra: History Program and Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 2002), 84.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel L. Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 55.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Mitchell, "Using the Five Senses to Trigger Memory – from Reminiscence to Oral History," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 29 (2007).

<sup>5</sup> Henderson, *Memory and Forgetting*, 23.

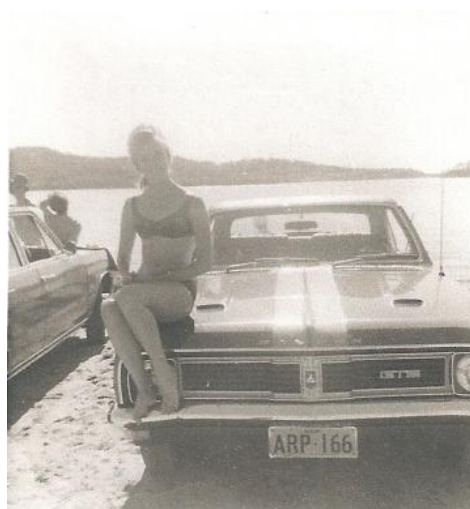
*engine". And when I got round the front I realised it wasn't the heat from the engine, it was the heat of Sydney.*<sup>6</sup>

There were many other similar memories. Katrina Richmond recalled that as she stepped out of the aeroplane 'a wall of visible heat hit me and enveloped me in its atmosphere'.<sup>7</sup> Murray Hunt got off the plane at Port Hedland, WA, where it was 36 degrees Celsius: 'I just remember this sudden sort of gust of hot. It seemed like you were walking into a furnace or someone had opened a furnace door'.<sup>8</sup> For Alexander Clifton the 42 degree heat hit him 'like a brick'.<sup>9</sup> To New Zealanders, used to a more temperate climate, Australia's warm weather was often the first strong memory of arrival.

Once disembarked migrants continued to notice differences in Australia's climate. Beth Hall, who migrated with her husband and two children in 1983, remembered the journey to their new home:

The journey by bus from Adelaide to Port Pirie was a nightmare due to the winds from the interior blowing sand as well as cinders from the fires raging in the hills. The bus driver kept stopping to check he was still on the road, the visibility was so poor. I recall struggling to hold the children upright when we stopped for refreshments and we felt like we had been sandblasted. Cinders were all around us and the smell of smoke was in the air.<sup>10</sup>

Beth's recollections recreate the sensory harshness of smoke-filled eyes and noses, itchy painful skin, and buffeting winds. Indeed Australia's more extreme climate was a shock to many New Zealanders. Migrants encountered new weather patterns of cyclones, drought, excessive rain, and electrical storms. Narrators continued to marvel at Australia's warmer temperatures. John Husband who moved to Australia as a teenager with his family recalled his response to the Australian climate:



**Figure 16. Jeanne Cashman at the beach, soon after her arrival in Sydney in 1970. Many young migrants enjoyed Australia's warm weather and beach lifestyle. Courtesy of Jeanne Cashman.**

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<sup>6</sup> Archer, interview.

<sup>7</sup> Richmond, written narrative.

<sup>8</sup> Murray Hunt, interview by narrator, Perth, WA, Australia, 4 July 2010.

<sup>9</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>10</sup> Hall, written narrative.



*I remember we went for a drive somewhere and Dad said to us, “Don’t wind the windows down”. And I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Oh it’s hotter outside than what it is inside the car”. I said, “You’re kidding?” So of course myself and probably other members of my family too wound the windows down. And we went, “Holy smoke!” Couldn’t believe it, couldn’t believe how hot it was. That was my very first impression. It was just, “God we’ve moved to the hottest place on this earth”.*<sup>11</sup>

For some migrants such as Benjamin Pittman the hot weather was wonderful: *‘it was perfect. There was the beach, the blue sky, the whole thing’*.<sup>12</sup>

As Benjamin’s comment about ‘blue sky’ suggests, migrants’ visual impressions of their new landscape often focused on new and unexpected colours. Colleen Cottier and her husband were so amazed at Australia’s brown



**Figure 17. Benjamin Pittman basking in the Sydney sunshine. Courtesy of Benjamin Pittman.**

sheep (in contrast to New Zealand flocks’ snowy fleeces) that they photographed them.<sup>13</sup> The red soil and heat in Gove, NSW, remain imprinted on Bruce Ringer’s mind.<sup>14</sup> Frank Pawson remembered his first view of Melbourne from the ship: *‘I remember looking out coming from Sydney, looking at the mainland from the sea, and wondering what on earth we were coming in to because everything was brown. It was brown as brown’*.<sup>15</sup> Trina Campano found Sydney’s grass a shock: *‘going from winter in Auckland where, you know, your grass is normally as green as microwaved peas, the grass was really brown’*.<sup>16</sup> Matthew Clements remembered the light in Sydney was different; *‘so strong and very glarey’*.<sup>17</sup> As the above memories reveal, Kiwi migrants particularly noticed colours which differed from their New Zealand equivalents.

The majority of New Zealand migrants settled in large Australian cities. The bustling cosmopolitan spaces of Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney provided new sensory experiences for New Zealand migrants. Once again migrants were particularly struck by differences to New Zealand. David Cavanagh, who landed in Melbourne, noticed the smell of petrol:

<sup>11</sup> Husband, interview.

<sup>12</sup> Pittman, interview.

<sup>13</sup> Colleen Cottier, written narrative sent to author, 13 October 2009.

<sup>14</sup> Ringer, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Pawson, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>17</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.



*The smell of the petrol was the first thing. I [can] still smell it now. Victorian petrol had a strange smell. I don't know what it is. Every now and again, even when we were in Perth, we'd get a load of fuel there that had the same smell ... it's a sweet sickly smell and I just didn't know what, but it struck me really strong.*<sup>18</sup>

David's sensory memory of the smell of petrol remains strong even many years after his migration, sparking recollections of his first moments in Australia. Julie Podstolski, with her artist's sensibility, was susceptible to new sensations:

*I remember the smells. And they weren't bad smells; tropical smells like frangipani. That was one of the first things that really struck me. Or even the smells walking past delis because we don't really have delis in New Zealand ... So salted meats on one hand, frangipanis on the other. Because it was Sydney and it was hot you get that smell of decaying rubbish sometimes. So the smell of decay as well.*<sup>19</sup>

For some migrants in urban settings the exotic noises of multicultural Australia created lasting memories. Coming from New Zealand, which he had found intolerant of cultural differences, Peter Potaka was mesmerised by the butchers, fish shops, and different ethnicities of Melbourne. For him it was an auditory experience: *'I listened to the languages and I listened to the accents and I thought, "Oh!" And we went off to a race meeting and then the same thing there. You know, all the different languages going on around you'*.<sup>20</sup> New sensory experiences formed the basis of many migrants' clearest migration memories.

## **A new society and culture**

Transitory sensory impressions were soon superseded by migrants' observations about surprising differences in Australian society and culture. The overall similarities between Australia and New Zealand did not necessarily ensure feelings of being at ease. Thomson and Hammerton in their study of British migrants to Australia observed a tension between familiarity and strangeness in British migrants' experiences of Australia. Even subtle changes were disorientating and some differences required significant adjustment.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, many New Zealanders found aspects of Australian society quite different to what they were accustomed. New Zealand migrants' impressions varied depending on where they lived and whom they interacted with. Kiwis living in the vast Western Australian outback provided dissimilar observations to those residing in Bondi Beach. This variation is to be expected; culture, as Anthony Cohen argues, is not a monolithic entity. Rather culture is the outcome of

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<sup>18</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*, 124.

interactions by which we make the world and ourselves meaningful and as such differs from person to person.<sup>22</sup> The following section outlines general patterns in New Zealanders' interactions with Australian society but is based on the belief that New Zealanders' experiences of Australian culture varied depending on their individual emotional, relational, historic, and geographic contexts.

Many New Zealanders were struck by Australia's multicultural society, particularly the large communities of European 'New Australians'. New Zealand society in the mid 1960s and 1970s was still relatively monocultural, in spite of a growing Māori population. Although the Pacific migration grew swiftly from the late 1960s, in 1976 Pacific people still only made up 2.1 percent of the population.<sup>23</sup> Until the 1970s, most New Zealand immigrants came from Britain. It was not until 1986 that New Zealand's immigration policy shed race criteria barriers to migration.<sup>24</sup> Australia by contrast received thousands of European migrants in the wake of World War II, and Asian migrants from the late 1970s onwards.<sup>25</sup> Large Australian cities had sizeable Greek, Italian, Lebanese, Jewish, Vietnamese, and Chinese communities. Janette Walker came to Sydney in 1968 with her husband. They both noticed the cultural differences:

Coming from New Zealand we marvelled at European foods; Italian, Greek and Hungarian, cheap and cheerful restaurants. The white faces struck me as I had been conditioned to not only the Māori and Islanders but also a lot of Indians. However, Greeks, Italians, Yugoslavians and European Jews were all called New Australians.<sup>26</sup>

Many migrants like Janette commented on the different (and better) food options available in multicultural Australia. Daphne Park was also struck by the different ethnic communities as she and her husband travelled around Melbourne looking for a house to buy in 1993:

*We'd go to the Jewish suburb and that was fascinating. The little black hats on and the beards and the phylacteries and the whole Jewish garb and the children dressed up and everything closed on the Friday night and the Saturday. That was fascinating because I thought it was sort of like a snippet of Israel. It was amazing. And then he'd take me to where he grew up in quite a Greek suburb. And here you'd have all these little Greek men and women running around*

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<sup>22</sup> Anthony P. Cohen, "Culture as Identity: An Anthropologist's View," *New Literary History* 24, no. 1 (1993): 196, 207.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics New Zealand and Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, "Demographics of New Zealand's Pacific Population," (2010), [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/pacific\\_peoples/pacific-progress-demography.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/pacific_peoples/pacific-progress-demography.aspx) (accessed 11 August 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Mein Smith, *A Concise History of New Zealand*, 245.

<sup>25</sup> Richards, *Destination Australia*, 204, 257-61.

<sup>26</sup> Janette Walker, written narrative sent to author, 19 August 2009.

*covered in black, and if they were in mourning they'd be all in black. They'd be holding fish and it was just another culture. And they'd have their fruit and veges in a basket. All this sort of thing that I hadn't grown up with. Then we'd move into Chinese areas downtown, and then the Vietnamese area in Richmond. I found all of that really interesting.*<sup>27</sup>

Daphne's observations of other migration groups reassured her that she was not the only newcomer as well as challenging her to learn more about their cultures. It was not only urban centres that had a mix of different nationalities. Rosa Tanga, working as a barmaid in the small country town of Ingham in Queensland, discovered that the town's population was largely Italian.<sup>28</sup> Bruce Ringer who moved to Gove estimated there were 59 different nationalities working on his mine site.<sup>29</sup>

New Zealand migrants also observed that Australia was comparatively wealthy, consumerist, and modern. The practical outcomes of this wealth were accessible loans and varied consumer choices. Mike Gammon noted the laxer criteria for finance almost immediately:

*The first thing that struck me was the heat. Then as I settled in I noticed that finance was much easier to get. Within days of being here I had my own car whereas in NZ at that time you needed either overseas funds to buy a new car or 1/3 deposit for 2nd hand.*<sup>30</sup>

Several migrants noted that the range and prices of consumer goods were better in Australia. Suzanne Belladonna on her first trip to Sydney spent about 200 dollars in a week on clothes: *'Buying hot pants – that was the thing in those days – dresses over little hot pants. And beige suede shoes with a stocky heel and wedge shoes, wedge clogs. Everything seemed quite cheap. Oh, bags and dresses and a bikini'*.<sup>31</sup> John Husband felt that Australia was more technologically advanced than New Zealand: *'the phone system was not a party line and there were colour TVs everywhere'*.<sup>32</sup> To Wendy Bull, Australia seemed more modern, fashionable, and American.<sup>33</sup> Migrants failed to comment on their own financial situation when recalling their first impressions of Australia. Assessing the economic impact of migration was a long-term reflection. Rather, their initial appraisal of Australia's wealth was based on consumer products: cars, clothes, and technology.

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<sup>27</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>29</sup> Ringer, interview.

<sup>30</sup> Gammon, written narrative.

<sup>31</sup> Belladonna, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Husband, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Bull, written narrative.



**Figure 18. Luna Park, c. 1977.** These two pictures from Annette Moody's photo album illustrate migrants' fascination with large Australian city buildings and experiences which differed from New Zealand's more quiet urban centres. Courtesy of Annette Moody.



**Figure 19. View of Sydney c. 1977.** Courtesy of Annette Moody.

entice men into the live sex shows). All the shops were open, even a bloody chemist. It was all new to us. Here we were, a couple of 17 year old kids from country towns in NZ, on an adventure. What a bloody eye-opener it was.<sup>38</sup>

The faster pace of life was also reflected in the traffic speeds. Murray Hunt's first impression of Sydney was that the taxi drivers were crazy: *'the trip from the airport to the address that*

Migrants who moved to urban centres in Australia quickly noticed the bigger size and faster pace of life in these cities. Beverly McGhie who moved from Wellington to Sydney in 1980 observed:

Sydney was a concrete jungle. It was large. Looming. Overwhelming. But it was new. The ethnicity was diverse and strange. I didn't feel like I was amongst my people. I felt like an ant in the cellar room of the ant hill. There were 3 million people in Sydney alone in those days.<sup>34</sup>

Several migrants used the phrase 'concrete jungle' when describing Sydney. The high rise buildings and architectural styles were different to what New Zealanders were used to. Henrietta May would walk along the streets of Sydney with her head bent upwards counting the storeys of buildings.<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth O'Connor and her children's first impression of

Melbourne was how strange all the brick houses looked compared to Wellington's wooden villas.<sup>36</sup> The seedy side of big cities also surprised some New Zealanders. David Cavanagh on his first day in Melbourne noticed a drug deal taking place across the room from him in a pub.<sup>37</sup> Several migrants, such as Shirley McNicol described their first experiences in Kings Cross, Sydney:

We put our bags in the room & headed to Kings Cross. The big Coca Cola flashing sign, prostitutes, night clubs, the clothing people were wearing, lots of Harley Davidson's parked down one side of the street, the smells and sounds (sprukers trying to

<sup>34</sup> Beverley McGhie, written narrative sent to author, 10 September 2009.

<sup>35</sup> Henrietta May, written narrative sent to author, 23 September 2009.

<sup>36</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>38</sup> McNicol, written narrative.

*we'd had, it was just mind boggling. It was over the speed limit and flat stick.*<sup>39</sup> Life in the big city was faster-paced than most New Zealanders were used to.

Some migrants loved the buzz and frenetic pace of city life while others hated it. Joyce Jellick on the Gold Coast found the 'glitz, hustle and bustle of the city ... exciting and intriguing to begin with'.<sup>40</sup> Diana Harlow loved the atmosphere of Melbourne; there was always something to do.<sup>41</sup> But other Kiwis were overwhelmed by big city life. Dulcie Driver felt Sydney was 'an unfriendly rat race and very intimidating after living in Dunedin'.<sup>42</sup> Marie Riechner came to Sydney from Hamilton in 1984 with her boyfriend. Initially she was excited. In the first week she went out constantly 'almost in a frenzy experiencing all these different things'. However after a while she came to dislike Sydney's large size:

After the initial novelty had worn off, the time spent travelling to work each day to and from work (over an hour each way) things suddenly felt very mundane and lonely. We knew no-one in Sydney except the people we worked with. To this day I maintain that it is very easy to be anonymous in a big city – people who only care about their own lives because they are all too busy rushing.<sup>43</sup>

Although Australia and New Zealand are culturally similar many migrants were struck by the differences between their smaller urban centres and the big Australian cities, in particular Sydney.

Migrants' impressions of the more isolated areas of Australia were quite different. Rather than bright lights and busy streets they experienced remote, alien surroundings. Noeline Gentle moved with her husband and child to Karratha, a mining town in Western Australia. Her first impressions were of a 'frontier town'; isolated, with a culture of excessive drinking and racism. The new environment was harsh with 'dust, heat, and bush flies, plus the new and often venomous creatures on the land and in the sea'.<sup>44</sup> Violet Murchison, who travelled by train to Toowoomba was also struck by the starkness of the countryside in comparison to her native Waikato: 'mile after endless mile of brown grass & gum trees which all looked the same'.<sup>45</sup> Perth was a strange combination of city and rural life. Although Perth lay in an idyllic spot on the Swan River, surrounded by beautiful beaches, Kiwis during the 1960s and

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<sup>39</sup> Hunt, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Jellick, written narrative.

<sup>41</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Dulcie Driver, written narrative sent to author, 9 October 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Reichner, written narrative.

<sup>44</sup> Noeline Gentle, written narrative sent to author, 20 August 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Violet Murchison, written narrative sent to author, 24 August 2009.

70s found it parochial, backward, and in spite of its size, underdeveloped. Rosanna McEvedey, like many other migrants, felt isolated in Perth:

The immense distances and poor telecommunications imposed a sense of isolation from the rest of Australia that was reinforced by the different time zones, the pioneering, pro-risk, try-anything WA mindset and resentment that the secession movement had been thwarted by WWII.<sup>46</sup>

But after the America's Cup Race of 1987 held in Fremantle, New Zealand migrants begin describing Perth in similar metropolitan terms to Sydney and Melbourne.

Kiwis' responses to these more isolated parts of Australia varied. Some migrants loved their new surroundings. John McNeil, who moved to Townsville to take up a new job as a journalist, appreciated the tropical surroundings and felt there was a 'sense of freedom' in the air.<sup>47</sup> Liz Brodie relished living and working as a jillaroo in Merrimba, a New South Wales outback station.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, Hillary Watford despaired on arriving in her new home in Western Australia: 'I burst into tears and sobbed my heart out. I thought Kalgoorlie was the pits'.<sup>49</sup> Even though some migrants were disappointed with rural Australia their initial shock faded over time.

Kiwis initially found travelling in their new environment confronting. Many migrants who moved to big Australian cities were impressed but confused by the public transport systems. New Zealanders had usually never experienced anything like Melbourne's, Sydney's, and Brisbane's extensive networks of buses, trains, and trams. Beth Cullen arrived in Sydney in 1979 aged 21, eager to escape her ex-boyfriend and meet her estranged mother who lived in Australia. Beth found using the public transport from the airport to her mother's house stressful:

I caught a bus to the city then a train. The trip seemed to last forever (as I was not used to the size of the city) as I was looking at every station we pulled into – worried that I might miss my stop. It took an hour to arrive at the station near my mother's house from where I caught a cab to their home. It was a sweltering hot day and there was no air conditioning in the trains in those days so I was rather hot & sweaty when I arrived.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Rosanna McEvedey, written narrative.

<sup>47</sup> McNeil, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Brodie, interview.

<sup>49</sup> Hillary Watford, written narrative sent to author, 20 November 2009.

<sup>50</sup> Cullen, written narrative.

For Vanessa Farrell who migrated to Melbourne with her parents and sister, aged nineteen, public transport was a great way to get about a new city. However, Vanessa and her family were initially bewildered by the different way Melbourne's trains and trams operated:

In Australia you would buy your ticket the same way on the bus and at the train station but there was no conductor in the trains? You needed to keep your ticket to get through the turn-styles at the exit. My Dad had to go back to the rubbish bin on the platform and retrieve his ticket! Trams were another learning curve. When a tram stops all the doors open – front, middle, and rear. So we boarded through the middle and sat down – expecting the conductor to come to us! We got a few stares from people and the conductor but no one came up to explain that we have to go see the conductor who sat in a little cubicle at the front of the tram to buy our ticket. As a result of this we thought tram rides were free!<sup>51</sup>

Even if they did initially find public transport daunting, New Zealand migrants soon adjusted. While some Kiwis continued to dislike the crowds and lengthy journeys, others appreciated public transports' long operating hours and convenience.

Driving in the big cities was an early challenge for some Kiwis in Australia. As mentioned previously, cars were easier to buy in Australia than New Zealand during the 1960s to early 1980s. For example, Trent Kimmer was able to buy a car on hire purchase almost immediately.<sup>52</sup> But after acquiring a car, migrants needed to learn to navigate their new environment. Sharleen Baker bought a red Datsun 180B after moving to Melbourne in 1978 but found that driving could be difficult:

Driving in Melbourne was a bit scary. I have never encountered such large intersections in my life before. I had to sit a theory exam for my license and learned all the special tram intersections off by heart. There were about 8 where one has to turn, wait, and then proceed, giving way to trams.<sup>53</sup>

In smaller cities such as Perth or Adelaide where the public transport was less developed, a car was more necessary. Paul McEvedey felt that the public transport was 'lousy' in Perth so he bought 'a miserable little Corolla', which (while it couldn't replace his beloved yellow mini) made him and Rosanna mobile.<sup>54</sup>

For many male migrants the experience of driving for the first time in Sydney, Melbourne, or Brisbane the big city was a memorable experience, sparking humorous anecdotes. These

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<sup>51</sup> Farrell, written narrative.

<sup>52</sup> Kimmer, written narrative.

<sup>53</sup> Sharleen Baker, written narrative sent to author, 11 October 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Paul McEvedey, interview.

stories' precise detail and phrasing indicated that they had been told before. For example, Matthew Clements narrates his first driving experience in Sydney as a funny cautionary tale:

*I was working right in the middle of the city in an engineering company, a construction company. The boss wanted me to drop some tender documents on the other side of the Harbour Bridge and he gave me the keys to his car which was a big V8 Commodore. And you're talking about someone who had had their license for about 18 months, but had actually only driven the car about twice in their life (but in Christchurch and never in Sydney). I had to go across probably the busiest thoroughfare in Australasia. And you know just getting out of the garage in this thing was a bit of a test for me. Then I got onto the Harbour Bridge and I can remember I was gripping the wheel so hard and the sweat was just pouring off me I was so nervous. The lane seemed so narrow and the cars were going all 80 kilometres an hour. But I safely navigated my way across and I was so relieved to get across the other side I didn't pay too much attention to what lane I was in. I got in the lane that goes back, [did] a U-turn and got back over the Harbour Bridge the other way. Navigating your way, once you get off the Harbour Bridge on the other side, it's no easy thing to get back again ... I just didn't know my way round. The trip which should have taken about 45 minutes took me about three hours. And I arrived back at the office I think, just near closing time, [a] complete mess. I was just absolutely distressed and tired and overwhelmed by the whole experience, totally drained you know. My immediate boss said to me, "Where the hell have you been?" And I told him the story about going across the Harbour. I had to pay three tolls I think on the way, 20 cents each time. They thought it was the biggest joke of all time. I remember them roaring with laughter at the story. But it was very very stressful.<sup>55</sup>*

Likewise, Frank Pawson talked about getting lost in Melbourne. A call to his boss on the two-way radio stopped him taking a wrong turn and driving 'right around Australia'.<sup>56</sup> Alexander Clifton also recalled his first accident-prone forays into Melbourne by van, reflecting that these trips were a process of losing his naivety.<sup>57</sup> Narrators' memories of driving about the city functioned as amusing initiation-rite narratives.

The other aspect of getting about in Australia which surprised New Zealand migrants was the sheer size of continental Australia. Quite a few migrants arrived via plane in Sydney, Melbourne, or Brisbane but then drove to their permanent destination. Mildred Royce began to understand the scope of Australia on her car trip from Sydney to Wahroonga via the Pacific Highway: 'I went, "What haven't we left [Sydney] yet?" He says, "No we've got about two more hours" ... I couldn't believe it you know. New Zealand's distances just don't prepare you for the lengthy trips that you make'.<sup>58</sup> David Cavanagh decided to drive from Melbourne to Perth without much idea of what he was doing:

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<sup>55</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>56</sup> Pawson, interview.

<sup>57</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>58</sup> Royce, interview.



*Decided to drive across Australia, having never driven further than Invercargill to Christchurch. It was a bit of a drive and it was a bit of an experience. I did it by myself for the first day. I picked up a hitchhiker the next day because I [had] no radio and I needed to talk to somebody at least ... Driving that distance by myself was a bit much. You just don't know the distances.<sup>59</sup>*

Most Kiwi migrants, during their time in

Australia came to realise that the Australian continent's immense distances differed greatly from New Zealand's compact geography.



**Figure 20. Jennifer and Bob Cooper's car on the road from Perth to Adelaide, 1969. The Coopers drove from Perth to Adelaide in their Beetle. They took this photo to show how unlike New Zealand Western Australia was. The couple used to take bets as to whether the road would turn left or right at the next bend. Courtesy of Jennifer Cooper.**

## **Discrimination and cultural confusion**

One of Kiwi migrants' biggest surprises in settling in Australia was discovering that they were identifiably distinct from Australian-born citizens. Although Kiwis never suffered the indignities which many other migrant groups dealt with, Australians were quick to pick up on their country of origin and comment on it. New Zealanders were teased about their accent and found themselves the butt of 'sheep jokes'. Some Kiwis also were initially bemused by Australian accents and slang. Australians' behaviour towards New Zealanders was bantering in tone and generally avoided actual discrimination. Indeed, some Māori felt they were better treated in Australia than in New Zealand. Only some Kiwis, like Toni, found their nationality a hindrance to finding work. While many migrants took this mockery in good humour and returned it with interest, others were frustrated by the experience. Quite a few migrants consciously altered their accent to avoid being pigeonholed as New Zealanders.

On arrival in Australia New Zealanders discovered they had an accent. Suddenly the way they spoke went from being unremarkable to a talking point. Jennifer Cooper described this experience:

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<sup>59</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

*In New Zealand you haven't got an accent and as soon as you come to Australia you have an accent. And you're totally unaware of it ... it's a real shock to discover that they believe it's you that has the accent when you actually think it's them that has the accent.*<sup>60</sup>

New Zealanders found that Australians often thought their way of talking strange and hilarious. Gillian McDonald moved to Perth with her boyfriend in 1987 from Hamilton. Her Australian friends were fascinated by her accent:

In the early days there was often light hearted banter asking me to say 'fush and chups'. And it was funny that we always had a 6 in our street number at various addresses which often caused some hilarity and jokes about 'sex' or 'sux'.<sup>61</sup>

Many New Zealand migrants mentioned that Australians loved to hear them say these two phrases. Liz Brodie became so sick of being asked to say 'fish and chips' that she used to say 'chish and fips' in order to deflect smart remarks.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes, Kiwi accents provoked a negative rather than bantering response. Peter Potaka during his first year in Perth taught at a primary school in the working class area of Midland Junction and realised that his accent was a potential problem: *'I can remember taking one group of kids for reading and one of them, the kid came round and he said, "My Dad said I'm not allowed to talk like you". I said, "Why's that?" and he said, "I'm not a bloody Pom"'*.<sup>63</sup> Peter knew that some of the Dads were 'bloody serious' so he respected this concern. New Zealanders and Australians speak a comparable form of English with many shared colloquialisms. Nonetheless there is a clear distinction between their accents to the people from these two nations. Rather than ignore the differences, Australians tended to comment on and make fun of Kiwis' accents.

The accent and language barrier was a two-way process. Quite a number of migrants had specific memories of their early confusion with Australian accents and idioms. John McNeil had problems with the North Queensland accent:

Queenslanders speak more quickly than Kiwis, and open their mouths less. And there are pronounced vowel shifts. For instance, instead of saying "It's fine today", to the Kiwi ear it sounded like "It's foin to die". I was also puzzled as to what 'big ewers' were. From time to time people would say to me "big ewers" and it was quite some time before the penny dropped: they could not understand my accent and were asking "Beg yours?" as in "I beg your pardon?"<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Cooper, interview.

<sup>61</sup> Gillian McDonald, written narrative sent to author, 16 October 2009.

<sup>62</sup> Brodie, interview.

<sup>63</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>64</sup> John McNeill, written narrative sent to author, 27 July 2009.

Kiwis found the broad Queensland accent most difficult to understand but sometimes also struggled with urban Australian accents. The confusion was sometimes mutual; at times Kiwis struggled to be understood. Matthew Clements and Julie Podstolski remembered such an experience in Sydney:

*JP I do also remember Matt going into a food court and asking for fish and chips, wasn't it?*

*MC Fish and chips, yeah.*

*JP And the lady could not understand him at all. She'd say, "What chicken?"*

*MC Fresh she thought. She was going, "Fresh chicken?" Just couldn't get this. Because they say "feesh", and I was [saying] "fush" probably.<sup>65</sup>*

Migrants throughout Australia also had to learn a new vocabulary. Warwick Tidswell who moved to Brisbane in 1988 recalled the roadside stalls offering 'pines, muddies and sandies' for sale (pineapples, mud crabs, and sand crabs).<sup>66</sup> Vanessa Farrell remembered 'speed humps instead of judder bars, thongs instead of jandals, esky instead of chilly bin, dinking on a bike instead of dubbing, unmarked police car instead of mufti, and free dress day instead of mufti.'<sup>67</sup> Alexander Clifton remembered one such occasion when he tried to ask the school's maintenance worker for a crescent spanner:

*I said, "I just want a crescent" and he said, "Well what do you mean?" I said, "I just need to borrow a crescent". I was thinking, "Is this guy stupid?" And it occurred to me and I said, "An adjustable spanner". And he said, "Oh you want a shifter".<sup>68</sup>*

Kiwi migrants' expectations of cultural similarity had not prepared them for the experience of communication breakdowns. While such misunderstandings were easily resolved they were a reminder of difference.

New Zealand migrants' responses to having a different accent varied. Some found the experience upsetting. Migrants who moved to Australia as children were sensitive to their classmates' teasing. Vanessa Farrell who arrived in Australia aged nineteen, worked hard to lose her Kiwi accent as she was teased about it at training college.<sup>69</sup> This is a common migrant experience. Angela McCarthy found that young Scottish and Irish migrants who

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<sup>65</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Tidswell, written narrative.

<sup>67</sup> Farrell, written narrative.

<sup>68</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>69</sup> Farrell, written narrative.

moved to America, Australia, or New Zealand were more vulnerable to teasing about their accent than older migrants, and subsequently assimilated quickly.<sup>70</sup> Some adult Kiwi migrants also disliked their accent being constantly picked up on as they felt it was a distraction. Jennifer Cooper said that comments on her accent detracted from her work as a computer programmer:

*The thing that bugged me was when I was working for ICL in Adelaide – I take my work seriously you know – I'd be explaining something to someone and they would pick on a bit of my accent. And that would really piss me off, because you know, it's not about how you say something; it's the content of what you're saying.<sup>71</sup>*

While some New Zealanders were unaffected by teasing, others cultivated an Australian accent. Diana Harlow 'got a lot of stick' about her accent so she practised using Australian vowel sounds on the tram in Melbourne:

*I wanted to get off at Flinders Street. And in those days my accent was obviously, you know, just off the plane. And I'd say, "Flunders Street" or something and everyone would look at me. So I would listen to Australians speaking and try to mimic it. And I actually remember saying "Fleenders Street"; really trying so that I didn't sound out of place. I really tried to change my accent.<sup>72</sup>*

Peter Potaka neutralised his accent in order to help his pupils understand him and avoid the wrath of their fathers. Some natural mimics automatically adopted an Australian accent without any conscious effort. Others like George Clarke responded by teasing Australians about their broad accent: '*they give us a hard time on the accent but we don't mind and we give a hard time to the way they pronounce Seedney*'.<sup>73</sup> Those Kiwis who retained their accent usually did so unintentionally although some migrants claimed they avoided saying certain words in an Australian accent. Jeanne Cashman said she refused to say 'dance' and 'chance' the Australian way.<sup>74</sup> Over the years many Kiwis' way of speaking naturally evolved into a hybrid New Zealand–Australia accent.

Most Kiwis also mentioned Australians' derogatory jokes about New Zealand. 'Sheep shagging' jokes were common, as were jokes which mocked New Zealand's small size, unsophisticated society, or sporting prowess. Jonathan Archer recalled some of the jokes he was told:

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<sup>70</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*, 188–90.

<sup>71</sup> Cooper, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>74</sup> Cashman, interview.

*You know, there's, "Kiwis are very even. They've got a chip on both shoulders". And the other one which I told at a party once and horrified a woman there, "How do you tell a Kiwi in a shoe shop? He's the one standing next to the ugg boots with an erection".*<sup>75</sup>

A few migrants found this constant barrage of jokes irritating. Alexander Clifton did not mind adult Australians cracking jokes; it was the incessant sheep jokes made by pupils from the high school where he was boarding master which infuriated him.<sup>76</sup> Shirley Cleary reflected that constant put-downs made her feel out of place in Australia although she eventually stopped minding.<sup>77</sup> For the most part Kiwis accepted that the jokes were made in a spirit of good humoured rivalry. Anthony Wilson commented that he heard 'every sheep joke ever invented' but that it was important to take 'that stuff in good humour.'<sup>78</sup> Quite a few migrants felt that the best response was to tease Australians in return. Madelaine Barry reflected:

No cultural adjustments were necessary, apart from the fact that one had to suffer the never ending Kiwi jokes. We think we have heard every joke every constructed, but learned to retell them and replace the poor hapless Kiwi with 'Australian'!<sup>79</sup>

Several narrators considered that the joking was actually symptomatic of the close relationship between New Zealanders and Australians. Noeline Gentle reflected:

I always enjoy identifying my 'Kiwi' roots to Australians and invariably the response is always the same. They enjoy a good 'put down' joke at New Zealand's expense. It is not meant unkindly and usually involves sport or some other perceived rivalry. It is like an older brother who is really very fond of his younger brother but can't resist 'pulling his leg' safe in the knowledge of superior size and age. It is a kind of 'we are family' reaction and I find it very amusing in its predictability and also quite touching.<sup>80</sup>

Migrants' experiences of Australians' teasing depended on their own attitude and personality. Those who, like Benjamin Pittman, could treat joking as 'friendly banter' and respond with their own jokes while realising that ultimately Australians and New Zealanders were 'all in it together' were much less likely to end up feeling unhappy and discriminated against.<sup>81</sup> But others like Janey Jarman never became hardened to Australians' teasing. On returning to live in New Zealand Janey reflected it was good to be home: 'No more hassles for being a

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<sup>75</sup> Archer, interview.

<sup>76</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>77</sup> Shirley Cleary, written narrative sent to author, 24 October 2009.

<sup>78</sup> Anthony Wilson, written narrative sent to author, 19 October 2009.

<sup>79</sup> Barry, written narrative.

<sup>80</sup> Gentle, written narrative.

<sup>81</sup> Pittman, interview.

foreigner ... the subtle things that make NZers different from Australians obviously mattered a lot to me even though I cannot verbalise them easily'.<sup>82</sup>

Some New Zealanders experienced mild discrimination when looking for work. A few Australian employers believed Kiwis would leave after a few months to travel. New Zealanders facing this situation had to convince their prospective bosses they were serious about staying in Australia. A few migrants also experienced a more general resentment that New Zealanders were taking Australians' jobs. Marie Reichner, who moved to Sydney in 1984, was one such migrant:

I started to look for work straight away and was surprised to find that some people were impressed with my resume until they found out that I was from New Zealand. A couple of people flatly refused to interview me. It seemed that there was a feeling at that time that Kiwis were going to Australia, taking jobs and job training positions and then leaving to go back to New Zealand. There was a feeling that we were not reliable.<sup>83</sup>

By contrast, some migrants noticed that New Zealanders had a reputation as hard workers in Australia. Paul Hamer's research reveals that many Māori feel they have a good reputation as reliable workers in Australia and experience less racism than in New Zealand.<sup>84</sup> Benjamin Pittman experienced both responses simultaneously. He found New Zealanders had a reputation for talent and hard work, but was also told on more than one occasion that he was 'over qualified' and 'there to pinch Aussie jobs'.<sup>85</sup> Ultimately, most Kiwis had no trouble finding work so clearly workplace discrimination was minimal.

## Invisible migrants

Over time New Zealanders slotted seamlessly into Australian society. Unlike most other major migrant groups to Australia during the twentieth century, who often moved into government organised migrant housing or hostels, New Zealanders found accommodation without state assistance.<sup>86</sup> In my entire sample group there was only one respondent who stayed in migrant accommodation. Grant Curtin, who moved to Melbourne in 1977 with his wife and son to work as an academic, stayed in migrant housing provided by the Victorian

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<sup>82</sup> Jarman, written narrative.

<sup>83</sup> Reichner, written narrative.

<sup>84</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 51.

<sup>85</sup> Benjamin Pittman, written narrative sent to author, 25 October 2009.

<sup>86</sup> For example, British migrants often initially lived in migrant hostels until the late 1960s. Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*, 167–88.

Housing Commission.<sup>87</sup> New Zealand migrants organised accommodation in the same way as native Australians: through kinship connections, newspapers, and rental agencies. Jeanne Cashman, who rejected the house her brother had pre-arranged, together with her friends and long-suffering brother found a new flat:

*We must have got the Saturday papers with flats to let and all the rest of it and we looked through the paper. With my brother's assistance – he told us where the suburbs were – we actually saw this flat advertised. It was a place called Balgowlah, which is out near Manly. So we all probably hopped on the public transport I'd say, and we went out – arranged with the estate agent – and went out to Balgowlah.<sup>88</sup>*

The cultural similarity and relaxed entry requirements between New Zealand and Australia meant there were few barriers in renting accommodation.

Furthermore, New Zealanders in Australia settled in similar areas to Australians instead of creating migrant enclaves of their own. As Chapter Two outlines, Kiwi migrants' geographic distribution in Australia mirrors that of native-born Australians more than that of any other migrant group. Unlike Vietnamese, British, or European migrants, Kiwis generally lived in similar suburbs to native Australians of the same demographic status.<sup>89</sup> A relatively high proportion of New Zealanders also moved to more remote settlements, usually in areas with economies reliant on tourism or mining. From the late 1960s to the early 1990s, Kiwis also followed the native-born Australian demographic trend of internal migration to Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory.<sup>90</sup> Their integration into all types of Australian neighbourhoods meant that Kiwis were the most invisible of Australia's migrants.

New Zealand migrants who did not have jobs prearranged also found work in similar ways to native Australians. The most common method for finding work was to search through newspaper job advertisements. Others received work through existing contacts. Jeanne Cashman gave herself a week to find a job, using old work connections to her advantage:

*I worked for the Guardian Trust in New Zealand which was a subsidiary of South British Insurance. So I walked into the South British United Insurance office in Sydney and met a very nice personnel officer. And I just happened to name drop and say I knew the son of the general manager of the Insurance company ... Anyway that name seemed to carry a lot of weight. So miraculously there was a typist job found for me.<sup>91</sup>*

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<sup>87</sup> Curtin, interview.

<sup>88</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>89</sup> Guest, "Distribution and Mobility of the New Zealand-Born in Australia," 227–30.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 221, 253.

<sup>91</sup> Cashman, interview.

Some migrants' Australian friends and family set them up in work. A surprising number of Kiwis, especially in the earlier years, found their jobs by door knocking and cold calling. Quite a few migrants used the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) to find work. The CES was an Australian Government employment agency established in 1946 with the introduction of the *Re-establishment and Employment Act 1945* and continued to exist under the provisions of the *Commonwealth Employment Service Act 1978*.<sup>92</sup> Dianne Harlow, who moved to Melbourne in 1980, used the CES to find a job as a live-in nanny.<sup>93</sup> A few migrants, particularly young women, also registered with employment agencies and did temping before finding a permanent job. Several New Zealanders attempted to start their own businesses after arrival but these were usually unsuccessful. Some migrants did build profitable businesses later on after they had gained experience of the Australian economy.

Most Kiwis (who wanted it) found work in Australia quickly and easily. Many migrants were employed within days or weeks of arrival. Almost every migrant had a job within a few months. For example, Bev Brown, who moved to Melbourne in 1968 with her sister and her sister's female friend recalled: 'We arrived on Saturday, caught a tram into the city on the Monday, and all arrived home that day with jobs!'<sup>94</sup> Even when the Australian economy was weaker, migrants still generally contrived to find work. Generally, professionals took longer to find work than those willing to do manual, clerical, or unskilled jobs. Those who struggled were usually people whose circumstances, education, or character meant they would have found work difficult to find anywhere. Janey Jarman's family moved to Sydney in 1992 for financial reasons. Her step-dad was on an invalid's benefit and could not find work in New Zealand due to his poor literacy skills. The family hoped that Australia might provide more opportunities but soon realised this was not the case. The Jarmans moved back to New Zealand after about 18 months as they missed home.<sup>95</sup> But most migrants acquired Australian jobs easily.

In terms of the challenges of finding work and accommodation, Kiwis avoided many of the difficulties migrants usually face. Due to their adaptability, personal drive, and cultural and linguistic similarity to Australians, New Zealanders fit in to Australian life effortlessly. As

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<sup>92</sup> "Commonwealth Employment Service," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth\\_Employment\\_Service](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commonwealth_Employment_Service) (accessed 10 March 2011).

<sup>93</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>94</sup> Brown, written narrative.

<sup>95</sup> Jarman, written narrative.



the years went by most New Zealanders purchased property and developed successful careers. But this ease in fitting in did not prevent Kiwi migrants' continuing sensitivity to certain differences between New Zealand and Australian society.

## **Underlying cultural differences in Australian society**

While a small minority of Kiwi migrants claimed they experienced no cultural differences between New Zealand and Australia, the majority of migrants, even after

years in Australia, still felt strongly about several key differences between Australian and New Zealand societies. A number of New Zealanders (mainly women) noted that Australians tended to be more sexist in their relationships. But it was discrimination against indigenous Australian Aboriginals which Kiwis found particularly distasteful. Some Kiwis took the moral high ground as they compared New Zealand's allegedly superior race relations between Māori and Pākehā with the situation in Australia.

Many Kiwi women, as well as some men, noted that Australian society seemed more discriminatory towards women. Alexander Clifton, who moved to Melbourne in 1994, was surprised to find that people told sexist jokes and called women 'girls'.<sup>96</sup> Daphne Park, also a migrant to Melbourne in the early 1990s, found herself working in an all male medical practice. She had to fight against her male colleagues' dismissive comments and the 'blokey Aussie thing' to earn their respect.<sup>97</sup> Career women often commented on Australian sexism. Robin Tobbell wrote at length about her struggles working in corporate finance in Sydney during the late 1970s onwards. She was subjected to sexual harassment from some co-workers and clients. She found that clients also doubted her professional ability:

The name 'Robin' in Australia is typically a male's name so clients assumed I was a man because of my senior position. On finding out I was female, usually when I had phone contact



**Figure 21. Colleen and Jon Szabo's first house in Perth. Kiwi migrants' first property purchase in Australia was often a proud moment. Courtesy of Colleen Szabo.**

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<sup>96</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>97</sup> Park, interview.

with them, these male clients would range from surprise to shock and occasionally annoyance or the request to 'speak to a man'. I am aware many clients asked my male colleagues if I was really competent to look after their finances.<sup>98</sup>

Some women also wrote about sexual discrimination in their day-to-day life in Australia: loans were harder to get, tradesmen wanted to talk to the man of the house, and barbeques were segregated. Even after years in Australia, many respondents still felt that New Zealand offered a more woman-friendly environment than Australia.

The majority of Kiwi migrants felt their difference from white Australians most strongly when it came to the issue of Indigenous Aboriginal Australians. Most New Zealanders were horrified by what they perceived as the backward and racist attitudes of Australians towards their native people. Many had Māori friends or family and could not help but compare the situation of indigenous peoples in New Zealand and Australia. To almost all, New Zealand seemed light years ahead in its race relations. Elizabeth O'Connor's daughter had been to a bicultural school in Hastings which had introduced the family to Māori culture. Elizabeth was surprised but proud when her daughter picked up on her Australian teacher's racist attitudes:

*What the teacher had said had really shocked me. But what amazed me more was that Mardi, even though she was only eleven, was also shocked by it. I bet there was not one other person in that class who was shocked by that. But what happened was that the kids were wandering round the class and the teacher said, "In this class we sit down like good Australians. We don't go walkabout like the Aborigines".<sup>99</sup>*

Kathy Black felt that there was no racial prejudice in New Zealand and had many Māori friends so she was astounded to witness racism in Australia:

Imagine my shock when working in a lounge bar when a gentleman came in to ask if some of his friends could come in for a drink (they were outside). I thought this was a strange request and then about 7 aboriginals walked into the bar and sat at the tables down the back. THE WHOLE BAR WENT DEATHLY SILENT. They were well behaved and returned their glasses to the bar and left and then the whole bar was abuzz again. I had never experienced racism before!<sup>100</sup>

Noeline Gentle who moved to the mining town of Karratha in 1971 felt that the treatment of Aborigines was the 'worst shock' in Australia. She was distressed to learn that the mining company had a policy of not employing Aborigines which forced them to remain on the outskirts of the town. She reflected:

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<sup>98</sup> Robin Tobbell, written narrative sent to author, 2 November 2009.

<sup>99</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>100</sup> Kathy Black, written narrative sent to author, 23 August 2009.

This was our first contact with a more overt form of racism than what we had experienced growing up in New Zealand. The level of ignorance and racism concerning the indigenous peoples and their culture and history amongst the average Australian then was truly staggering and very sad.<sup>101</sup>

Time and time again New Zealand migrants commented on their amazement at the lack of knowledge about Aboriginal culture and the racism shown towards Aboriginal people. Underlying this shock was a sense of superiority at New Zealand's comparatively good record of race relations.

For quite a few New Zealanders observing this racism led them to take action. New Zealanders found themselves confronting white Australians about their attitudes towards Aboriginal people. David Cavanagh, motorcyclist and mechanic from Invercargill, gave an example:

DC       *Probably the hardest thing for me has been the racial thing.*

RB       *How did you feel about that?*

DC       *Not happy. Yeah, it really gets on my go. I just think there's an issue there. I can understand it. There's a lot of issues in the Aboriginal community. I've got a white Australian boss and he has a standard issue that they don't get off their arse and do anything. And I said, "Well you just developed it that way and you talking like that is the one that's making it happen". I used to not say anything and now I just get up and tell him, "If you want to, you have a go and do something about it".<sup>102</sup>*

Some migrants worked with Aboriginal groups. Elizabeth Ware and her family moved to work in an Aboriginal community in the Northern Territory. Elizabeth finally felt at home after three and a half years in Australia. She realised she had missed 'brown people' after growing up in New Zealand amongst Māori and Islanders and then living in Papua New Guinea.<sup>103</sup> Māori in particular felt a strong kinship with a fellow indigenous people. Paul Hamer notes that Māori often support Aborigines' role as Australia's indigenous people. Many Māori work with Aboriginal communities and there is also a significant amount of intermarriage.<sup>104</sup> Peter Potaka, born in Opotiki and part of a large Māori family, moved to Australia in 1973 with his Pākehā wife. Over the years the couple taught in various Aboriginal schools. Their first experience was in Merrivale School, on the edge of the Simpson desert near Alice Springs. They wrote their own resources to suit the Aboriginal

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<sup>101</sup> Gentle, written narrative.

<sup>102</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth Ware, written narrative sent to author, 2 October 2010.

<sup>104</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 131, 35.

children and often taught class outside. Peter was accepted by the local tribe as he was a ‘yella fella’ and grew to have a great respect for Indigenous Aboriginal Australians’ survival skills in the desert. Years later, in his role as Deputy Principal at an Aboriginal Boarding School, Peter took a class of students back to his home marae in order to let them experience another indigenous culture. His work with Aboriginal people gave him new confidence in his own Māori identity.<sup>105</sup>

But Kiwi migrants’ attitudes about Aboriginal people were also threaded through with a sense of confusion. Many migrants stated that the problems were different to those in New Zealand. While they decried white Australians’ racism, New Zealanders felt helpless faced with the insoluble social ills within Aboriginal communities. Some New Zealanders ended up taking a similar view to white Australians: that the Aboriginal people did not want to be helped and were making their own problems. This was a result of their own observations of homeless, jobless, and drunk Aboriginal Australians. Even Peter Potaka, for all his experience and sympathy with Aboriginal peoples, knew that a lot of the negative criticism was justified: ‘*They [his white Australian friends] didn’t have a hell of a lot of good things to say about them and in a lot of instances they were right. But jeepers, they didn’t give them much of a shot to be themselves*’.<sup>106</sup> Murray Hunt was initially shocked at how Australians treated Aborigines as he had expected them to be ‘assimilated similar to how the Māori were back in New Zealand’. But Murray’s contact with Australia’s indigenous people was mostly unfortunate. He noted that they were ‘*traditionally round the bars and pubs and you saw them in various states of alcoholic, well just absolutely blotto really*’.<sup>107</sup> Colleen Szabo worked as a welfare officer in Perth and could see both sides of the issue:

*I felt that I had more understanding because at the time Australians really put them [Aboriginal Australians] down and called them all sorts of things. And I could see there was an alcohol problem and that the young girls were being molested ... I felt very sorry for them. But then again we lived opposite an Aboriginal family who were just so drunk every night, and spilling out into the street, and throwing rocks at your house, and begging for money, and that was different again. I never gave them money. I always just gave them potatoes and bread or something, because they’d just go and drink it up. But I saw two different sides, yeah. And I felt it would take years before any breakthroughs came.*<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Hunt, interview.

<sup>108</sup> Szabo, interview.

Frank Pawson visited some very rough Aboriginal settlements in his travels across Australia. He declared ‘*something’s got to be done about our indigenous people. Something is definitely wrong.*’ But the unanswerable nature of the problem made Frank emotional and upset.<sup>109</sup>

Most New Zealanders took pride in the comparably better position of Māori in New Zealand society and were thus critical of the treatment of Australia’s indigenous people. Yet when it came to personal contact with Aboriginal people many Kiwi migrants could not help but make negative judgements. This led them to simultaneously hold both sympathetic and critical views of Australian Aborigines.

## Conclusions

Kiwis did experience Australia as migrants but their initiation into Australian society was a gentler journey than that of other migrant groups. Because of New Zealand’s historical links, linguistic similarity, and geographic closeness with Australia, many Kiwis seem to have been unprepared for any differences in their new country. But strangeness did exist in the midst of familiarity, and was often more striking for its unexpectedness. Kiwi migrants’ first memories of Australia focused on new sensations: different temperatures, colours, sounds, smells, and tastes. New Zealanders also noticed differences in Australian settings, whether modern cosmopolitan cities or bleak outback vistas. To their surprise, Kiwis also discovered they were recognisably different, although Australians treated them more as backward cousins than foreigners. Most Kiwis faced teasing about their accent and nationality; some were mildly discriminated against when looking for work.

As this chapter reveals, Kiwis did not all have the same experiences of Australian society and culture. Although New Zealand migrants tended to notice similar differences in Australian life (accent, climate, landscape, consumerism, big city life, and ethnic groups) their responses differed according to their personality, time of migration, and place of settlement. Kiwis living in outback Australia had vastly different experiences to those in big cities. Even within the same locale, migrants’ responses varied; while some loved the bustling metropolises, others found them crowded and isolating. Australian society was not static either. Kiwis who settled in Perth in the late 1960s had a very different experience to those who moved there 20 years later. Furthermore, migrants’ own attitudes played a large role in their responses to Australian

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<sup>109</sup> Pawson, interview.

differences. This is particularly apparent when considering Kiwis' reactions to teasing and mild discrimination. While some migrants hated sheep jokes and laboured to lose their accent, others found Australians' banter funny, even heart warming, and learned to return it in earnest.

Because Kiwis' experiences of cultural differences and teasing were relatively minor and benign, New Zealand migrants usually adapted to Australian society quickly. In many ways New Zealanders were invisible migrants, finding work and accommodation easily and in a manner similar to native Australians. Kiwis spoke the same language and often adopted an Australian accent. Pākehā migrants were indistinguishable from native European Australians. However, there were a few areas where migrants continued to feel an uncomfortable disjunction with Australian society. A number of Kiwis felt that Australians were more sexist. Migrants' most common long-term cultural disconnect was their disapproval of European Australians' racist attitudes towards Australia's indigenous peoples. Over time Kiwis did realise that the problems faced by Indigenous Aboriginal Australians were different to those experienced by Māori in New Zealand. Nonetheless, Kiwis retained a sense that in this area New Zealand culture was different, and superior. This attitude suggests (as will be explored further in Chapter Eight) that many migrants, even after adapting seamlessly into Australian society, still identified as New Zealanders.

## Chapter Six: Making Connections

In recent years migration historians have used the concept of networks to explain patterns of mobility, settlement, and links with home. They borrow this approach from anthropologists and sociologists who have long understood that informal personal networks influence internal and international movement.<sup>1</sup> While, as Chapter Three reveals, informal kinship networks played a vital role in Kiwis' migration decisions, relationships remain important long after the initial move. When investigating post-migration networks, transnational historians emphasise the connections between sending and receiving nations. But as Susan Wierzbicki points out, transnational migration theorists often ignore how migrants access existing networks or establish ties in their new host society.<sup>2</sup> Migration sociologist, Louise Ryan, argues that academics must not overlook migrants' local sources of support. While transnational networks are important, migrants do not spend their whole lives enmeshed in offshore relationships.<sup>3</sup> This chapter focuses on Kiwi migrants' Australian-based networks with both non-migrants and fellow migrants.

New Zealand migrants joined a wide range of networks. I follow Louise Ryan's suggested approach of identifying migrants' different types of relationships and their varying levels of support.<sup>4</sup> One possible theory of categorising networks and their social capital, as used by Robert Putnam, is separating networks into *bonding* ties – connections with people like me in some important way, and *bridging* ties – connections with people unlike me in some important way.<sup>5</sup> But applying this theory to Kiwis in Australia is problematic as they feel commonality with native Australians, fellow Kiwis and other migrants. New Zealanders' relationships cannot be sharply separated into bonding and bridging ties.<sup>6</sup> A more helpful schema is Granovetter's notion of weak and strong social ties.<sup>7</sup> In this chapter I distinguish between the relative strength of migrants' various relationships. While many theorists

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<sup>1</sup> Monica Boyd, "Family and Personal Networks in International Migration," *International Migration Review* 23, no. 3 (1989).

<sup>2</sup> Susan Wierzbicki, *Beyond the Immigrant Enclave: Network Change and Assimilation* (New York: LBF Scholarly Publishing, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood," 297–8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 298; Louise Ryan, "Migrants' Social Networks and Weak Ties: Accessing Resources and Constructing Relationships Post-Migration," *The Sociological Review* 59, no. 4 (2011).

<sup>5</sup> Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

<sup>6</sup> Critics argue there is an overlap between bonding and bridging relationships which challenges a simplistic dichotomy. See R. Patulny and G. L. Svendsen, "Exploring the Social Capital Grid," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 27, no. 1/2 (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Mark Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," *Sociological Theory* 1(1983).

evaluate migrants' networks by considering their influence on social mobility and economic success, I focus on the relational, emotional, and practical support provided by local connections.<sup>8</sup>

Developing relational networks was an essential part of New Zealand migrants' settlement process. A recent assessment of migration, development, and human rights argues that migration researchers must study migrants' local social networks as these are vital to successful settlement.<sup>9</sup> Existing Australian contacts helped Kiwis with early practical arrangements although these connections faded over time unless a genuine friendship developed. Kiwis often made friendships within local Australian society through sporting and cultural groups, their work, neighbourhood, and children. These networks provided practical and emotional support as well as company and a sense of fitting in. Many Kiwis also kept in touch with other New Zealanders in Australia or befriended other migrants. Often these connections were looser, even fleeting, but reassured migrants with a sense of shared national history or mutual difference. Ultimately migrants' close nuclear relationships with extended family, romantic partners, and their own children anchored them most firmly in Australia.

## **Australian contacts**

Existing contacts often helped new migrants find their feet during their first few weeks in Australia. Most migrants had at least one contact – a family member, friend, work colleague, or distant acquaintance – in their Australian city of arrival. Contacts often picked migrants up from the airport. Gerry Ryall and his Australian wife were greeted at Sydney airport by a big group of her friends and family. The group moved from a bar to the Ryalls' motel where they partied until late.<sup>10</sup> Bruce Ringer, who moved to Perth in order to make it big in the mines of Gove, was met by a work contact who helped him fly to Western Australia the next day.<sup>11</sup> Contacts who met new migrants provided practical support and a familiar face during the first few days in a new place.

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<sup>8</sup> This approach is used particularly by academics considering women's post-migration experiences. For example, Ros Edwards, "Present and Absent in Troubling Ways: Families and Social Capital Debates," *The Sociological Review* 52, no. 4 (2004); Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood"

<sup>9</sup> Puentes et al., "Towards an Assessment of Migration," 16–18.

<sup>10</sup> Gerry Ryall, written narrative sent to author, 3 September 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Ringer, interview.





**Figure 22. Graeme Shirley and Celeste. Graeme was met in Sydney airport by his Australian girlfriend Celeste. He still recalls the green dress she wore: ‘She looked quite nice.’ Courtesy of Graeme Shirley.**

These Australian contacts often prearranged migrants’ accommodation or in many cases welcomed them into their own homes. Gay Gibson, who migrated to Perth in 1988 with her husband and three children, received aid from an acquaintance made during previous travels: ‘We were met by a lady we had chatted to at Singapore Airport on our trip the previous August. She had offered to help us as we didn’t know anyone in Perth and

she booked a motel near her home and arranged food for our first day’.<sup>12</sup> Younger migrants often lived for a couple of weeks with Australian contacts before finding a flat of their own. David St. George, who moved to Sydney in 1985, ‘bludged a couple of weeks accommodation’ from an old school friend and his cousin before finding a place in Kirribilli.<sup>13</sup> Julie Podstolski and Matthew Clements stayed with Matthew’s cousin in Sydney. Matthew recalled, ‘*she was the sort of person that people would just arrive on her doorstep at 4*

*o’clock in the morning and there was always a bed for them. And we stayed there for a month or so before we got a flat of our own’.*<sup>14</sup> Family were also usually happy to host migrants for weeks, even months, until they established themselves. Rosa Tanga turned up to her aunt’s house in Brisbane without any prior warning and stayed there for a week until she found a job.<sup>15</sup> Australian contacts’ help with transport and accommodation lessened the need for Kiwis to plan out every stage of their move prior to departure.

Many Australian contacts showed great kindness to the new Kiwi migrants. Jeanne Cashman ruefully reflected on the longsuffering patience of her brother who was her first contact in Sydney:

*I was lucky because my brother met us at the airport. He is eight years older than me so I was 19, he was late 20s. And he had in fact organised a flat for us at Rose Bay which is out Bondi way, or out in the eastern suburbs. But us four fussy girls, when we went out there that night we didn’t like the flat. And so often I think my brother had a lot of patience that night. So we refused to stay in the flat. He must have lost money on that because he would have paid the bond and the first couple of weeks rent I’d say at least.*<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Gibson, written narrative.

<sup>13</sup> St George, written narrative.

<sup>14</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Cashman, interview.

Most migrants did not stay in close touch with these initial contacts in subsequent years unless they became good friends. Matthew O'Brien's first contact in Perth later became a close friend:

*Came to Perth because his [Matthew's friend] mother's friend's son was living here in Perth. So he decided to pick us up from the airport. We left Surfer's and we came over to Perth. He picked us up, put us in the back of his Ute from the airport, and put us in this little room ... It was quite funny because the guy that picked us up at the airport ... we're still very good friends now actually. Known him for 20 years.<sup>17</sup>*

Most Australian contacts' generous welcome helped migrants adjust to their new surroundings, and provided practical support when Kiwis had not yet developed their own networks.

## Making friends

Kiwi migrants needed more than just useful contacts; good friends were essential to fitting in to Australian society. As sociologist Ann Oakley points out, geographically close friendship networks are more likely to provide practical support and company than transnational relationships.<sup>18</sup> Kiwis made friends through their involvement in organized groups, workplaces, children's schooling, and neighbourhoods. Most New Zealanders made friends easily, although their new friendships could be initially superficial.



**Figure 23. The Rocks Players performing outdoor theatre in Sydney. Courtesy of Annette Moody.**

The most common way for New Zealand migrants to make Australian friends was through joining organizations. Membership of an organized group offered a sense of purpose and helped fill in spare time. Socialising with others who had shared interests was an excellent way for migrants to get to know like-minded people. The most extreme example of this was Annette Moody, whose two-year sojourn in Australia was consumed by her involvement in 'The Rocks Players', an amateur theatre group in Sydney. Annette felt that joining this group was like 'coming home to a family'. She produced plays, joined a script writing

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<sup>17</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>18</sup> Ann Oakley, *Social Support and Motherhood* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

class, and moved flat to be near the group's headquarters. Her social life revolved around fellow theatre folk.<sup>19</sup> New Zealanders most commonly made friends through joining sports teams or churches, but also linked into organisations such as Jaycees groups, bushwalking clubs, neighbourhood fire fighting teams, and school fundraising committees.

Sports organizations, in particular rugby teams, were by far and away the most common group joined by New Zealand migrants. Australians often persuaded Kiwi men to join local rugby teams due to New Zealand's stereotype as a rugby union powerhouse. George Clarke moved to Sydney to work at the BHP Newcastle Steel Mill in 1969 and was immediately approached to play rugby by a number of different clubs. He ended up playing for Mayfield East because the Captain of the side was Superintendent at his Steel Mill.<sup>20</sup> Alexander Clifton started coaching an under-15 rugby team at Xavier College. He attended a training session at the Melbourne Harlequin's Rugby Club to re-familiarise himself with a game he had not played since he was a child:

*Then someone said, "You right for Saturday?" and I said, "Yeah". And [I was] thinking, "Oh there's no way you're playing rugby again. Come on you can't be serious". Then standing there at kick off and thinking, "What the hell am I doing here? You know I gave up rugby a long time ago for a good reason".<sup>21</sup>*

In spite of his reservations, Alexander played rugby for three years and his team became a major part of his social life. Rugby clubs were often meeting places for expatriate Kiwis, South Africans, and British. Hillary Watford never entered rugby clubs in New Zealand but when she moved to Perth she found that her husband's rugby club was family and female friendly. Through this club she met other ex-pats who became lasting friends.<sup>22</sup> New



**Figure 24. John McNeill (left) with diving team at Australian Diving Championships. John became heavily involved in competitive springboard diving on moving to Sydney in the late 1960s. Courtesy of John McNeill.**

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<sup>19</sup> Moody, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>22</sup> Watford, written narrative

Zealanders also made friends through joining squash, netball, hockey, tennis, golf, rugby league, touch rugby and softball clubs as players, coaches, and administrators.

Religious organizations also provided friendship and practical support, particularly for women. For migrants who were already part of a faith community in New Zealand it was usually easy to join a local branch of the church in the new location. Elizabeth O'Connor and her husband pre-enrolled their children in a Melbourne Catholic school. They arrived to find that members of the parish and school had furnished their first home with borrowed furniture. Elizabeth subsequently became very involved in the local parish.<sup>23</sup> Sharleen Baker moved to Melbourne in 1978 just before her 21st birthday. She joined a Christadelphian youth group, travelled to youth camps interstate, and made a new circle of friends.<sup>24</sup> Mildred Royce came from a devout Seventh Day Adventist Samoan family in Auckland and moved to Australia in order to attend a denominational university. Mildred felt that the continuity meant 'there was that sense of security; you knew that everybody believed the same thing'. She continued to teach in Seventh Day Adventist Schools and she reflected that her '*whole life's sort of revolved around the church*'.<sup>25</sup> Sometimes migrants joined a church hoping to meet people. After about 10 years in Australia, Toni Te Kowhai, who did not attend church previously, took her children along to the local Anglican church. She had not made many friends in Sydney during her early years due to her busy transient lifestyle but at church she developed '*some really good relationships with the ladies who were either mothers or coming to church consistently*'.<sup>26</sup> Religious groups helped migrants make friends with others holding a similar world view as well as providing regular church services, meetings, and social events.

The second most common way Kiwi migrants made Australian friends was through their work or study. Workmates became some of migrants' earliest friends. While some Kiwis made good friends in their jobs, others found workplace relationships superficial. Mike Gammon, who worked at a radio station in Perth recalled: 'workmates saying, "You'll have to come round for dinner one night". It never happened. There seemed to be a lot of back-slapping "I'm your mate" type thing that never seemed genuine'.<sup>27</sup> Working in an isolated area of Australia meant there were few options for friends outside of work. Although Murray

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<sup>23</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>24</sup> Baker, written narrative.

<sup>25</sup> Royce, interview.

<sup>26</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Gammon, written narrative.

Hunt was no longer close friends with past co-workers, he still felt a powerful camaraderie with them from working together on mine sites.<sup>28</sup> Friendships made during the formative years of university study were often long-lasting. John Husband had many stories to tell about the high jinks of his engineering year group of 1973, and keeps in touch with friends made during his studies.<sup>29</sup>

Although workplace networks usually did not provide close emotional support, they enabled entry into wider Australian social, business, and professional networks. Daphne Park's story highlights the emotional and career benefits of finding work. Daphne moved to Melbourne in May 1993 so her new Australian husband Geoff could finish his GP training. Daphne was a trained Speech and Language therapist and was wanted to work in psychology. Positions were difficult to find but she was determined to start work so she could '*find my own space and world*'. Initially she dressed too conservatively in the interviews compared to the '*snazzy, jazzy, and out there*' Melbourne applicants. The fierce competition for jobs shocked Daphne who was used to New Zealand's 'cosy' networks. After several failed interviews, she received a job interview for a speech pathologist job at a private clinic in Wonthana. Running late due to her inexperience with busy Melbourne traffic, she put her make-up on in the car and accidentally smeared it all over her clothes. In desperation she put her polo neck on back to front and fronted up 30 minutes late, feeling resigned to failure. But she impressed the panel who gave her the job. For Daphne this was a 'turning point': '*I had finally broken in*'. Once she was in the workforce she was able to '*develop an understanding of the culture*' and '*network and bounce around*'.<sup>30</sup> Finding work was an entry point into Australian society for Kiwi migrants: it opened up networks and gave them an identity as workers.

Many New Zealand migrants' children provided an avenue for befriending Australians of a similar age and life stage. Kiwis met other parents through play groups, school, and their children's extracurricular activities. Tony Harris made most of his friends in Brisbane through helping at his children's primary school and his son's under seven's rugby team.<sup>31</sup> For Kiwi mothers, who often stayed home looking after children, meeting other parents

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<sup>28</sup> Hunt, interview.

<sup>29</sup> Husband, interview.

<sup>30</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>31</sup> Tony Harris, interview.

helped banish loneliness. Trina Campano felt isolated staying at home with her two children until she joined a playgroup:

*And then I joined a playgroup and they were awesome as a group. I learnt a lot about them as people and our community and what made Australians tick. For Australians, they were generally very open ... They were a group who I learnt a lot from. And I valued that and I still have friendships with them.*<sup>32</sup>

Colleen Szabo said her 'life was lonely' until she joined her children up to the Hungary Scout moment. Through the Scouts the Szabo family all made friends.<sup>33</sup> Having school aged children was usually a definite advantage for Kiwi migrants in finding a more permanent place in Australian society.

Friendships with other parents also helped provide Kiwis with assistance in the absence of extended family care networks. Research shows that instrumental support such as childcare is usually provided by local friendships.<sup>34</sup> Jennifer and Bob Cooper's friendships with other parents gave them invaluable practical support:

JC        *It can be quite hard raising children on your own. You really do have to find an alternative support group.*

RB        *And what was your alternative support group?*

JC        *It was the Amdel [company Jenny's husband worked for] mob. They all had babies at the same time and there was one family who had three children and the youngest was a year older than ours. So Chris lent me all the baby gear, and she was a nurse. [If] you had any problem at all you rang up Chris. You always got an answer ... There was three babies born, you know, three families and so we did things like share the babysitter. There was one family – Chloe and Patrick [the children] were the same age – and Liz and Brian and Bob and I got season tickets to the Adelaide symphony. We used to go on Friday nights and they went on Saturday nights. The person going out would drop their child off at the others. We did reverse, swap babysitting, which was brilliant.*<sup>35</sup>

In Chapter Eight I address in more detail how female migrants' coped with motherhood in Australia without family support. Reciprocal relationships with other Australian parents eased the stresses of bringing up children without extended kinship networks.

Kiwis also regularly made friends with housemates and neighbours. For young Kiwi migrants, shared living provided instant contacts through flatmates and friends of flatmates. Julie Podstolski and Matthew Clements were initially horrified by their first flat in Sydney

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<sup>32</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Szabo, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Peter Willmott, *Friendship Networks and Social Support* (London: Policy Studies Institute, 1987).

<sup>35</sup> Cooper, interview.

where everyone cooked separately and kept to themselves. Over the next year Matt and Julie encouraged a more communal atmosphere with their housemates, making meals and going to pubs or concerts together.<sup>36</sup> When Kiwi migrants lived in an area together with fellow workers or students, friendships formed quickly. Veronica Barbagallo moved into a block of six flats in Sydney and soon made friends with all the tenants, including a younger Italian Australian mining engineer who later became her husband.<sup>37</sup> Those in university or mining accommodation often found themselves amidst others new to the area also looking for friendship. Sue Feary moved to Canberra in 1977 with her husband who was doing his PhD at the Australian National University. The family lived in a university compound:

It was full of young student families from all over the world and had a big communal space where we all used to get together. It was a wonderful place to be with a new family, as mothers were at home and all the children played together and learnt about other cultures.<sup>38</sup>

In suburban areas sometimes migrants would find themselves living in a particularly friendly area. Ann Orre recounted her experience in their Sydney cul-de-sac where the neighbours held street parties and the kids ran around together.<sup>39</sup> Migrants often formed lasting relationships with neighbours, especially when they were at a similar life stage.

Most narrators in my sample (even those who returned to New Zealand) now have good Australian friends but this took time. Some migrants felt their friendships with Australians were superficially friendly but lacked the depth of their New Zealand relationships. Jennifer Cooper commented that it took six months for her to break the ice with her Adelaide co-workers as they had their own social groups.<sup>40</sup> Trina Campano encountered this in Sydney also:

*I consider myself to be quite outgoing and I don't have a problem meeting people but I struggled. I just found people quite, they could be quite friendly on the outside but [it was] a long time before they let you into their inner circle.<sup>41</sup>*

Trina missed her close New Zealand friends and only connected meaningfully with Australians after joining a play group with other mothers. Especially in big cities, where the pace of life was faster and people were more spread out geographically, migrants had to

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<sup>36</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Veronica Barbagallo, written narrative sent to author, 31 August 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Sue Feary, written narrative sent to author, 2 October 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Orre, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Cooper, interview.

<sup>41</sup> Campano, interview.

adjust to a different type of socialising. A number of migrants commented that Australians in big cities were less likely to invite new friends into their homes or ‘drop in’. Daphne Park had many networks through her Australian husband but it took time for her to adjust to the Melbourne way of socialising:

*I'd get caught up in the whole, "Oh but we saw them, we're having dinner with them and we hardly know them". "Oh no, they're good friends" Geoff would say. And I'd think, "That's really odd, because if they're good friends wouldn't they pop round more?" But they don't and I understand that now. And I would say I have good friends that come round that I don't see much either. Different. Yeah, you just have to shift your head to match it."<sup>42</sup>*

It was difficult for some migrants, females in particular, to realise that they could not replace their deep New Zealand friendships immediately.

New Zealand children and teenagers often struggled making friends in new schools. Some migrants wrote that their children were teased for being Kiwis. Lauren Lindsay's son was badly bullied in his first term at a private school in Sydney. He eventually moved schools but his learning was negatively affected by the experience.<sup>43</sup> Katrina Richmond moved to the Gold Coast in 1979 with her family when she was eleven. She wrote that her classmates ‘teased me for being a backward Māori whenever I gave them the opportunity’.<sup>44</sup> Young migrants often found it difficult to rationalise teasing as good humoured; their sensitivity about being different could delay them forming friendship networks.

## **New Zealand networks**

Kiwis' networks with fellow New Zealanders depended on their time, stage, and experience of migration. Revisionist migration social scientists argue that ethnic groups need to be studied as fluid events, categories, networks, and organisations rather than monolithic entities.<sup>45</sup> Rogers Brubaker argues that shifting attention from ethnic/national groups to studying ‘groupness’ allows academics to note times of cohesion but also the absence of group solidarity.<sup>46</sup> This viewpoint highlights that Kiwis often revealed low levels of groupness; their interactions with their countrymen were often sporadic and informal. This contrasts with other migrant groups who move somewhere dissimilar to their homeland. Such migrants often rely on organisations to maintain their language, culture, celebrations, kinship

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<sup>42</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Lauren Lindsay, written narrative sent to author, 24 August 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Richmond, written narrative.

<sup>45</sup> Virginia Yans, “On ‘Groupness’,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 25, no. 4 (2006): 120, 123.

<sup>46</sup> Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Groups,” *European Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (2002): 168.



networks, and religion. For example, Chinese who migrated to New Zealand during the twentieth century formed numerous Chinese cultural associations, language schools, radio stations, and newspapers.<sup>47</sup> However, Pākehā migrants did not need to consciously maintain their language or cultural practices, and only a small number joined New Zealand organisations. Rather casual connections with other Kiwis arose out of convenience, shared interests, and experiences, or a desire to reminisce about New Zealand. A larger proportion of Māori linked into Māori culture, performance, and welfare organisations. These examples of groupness changed over time. As migrants made more Australian friends, New Zealand contacts became less vital. Forms of connection also altered. With the advent of the internet, some Kiwis joined new web networks.

With New Zealand migration to Australia so common, many Kiwis lived and socialised with fellow Kiwi migrants during their first few years in Australia. Sometimes this was due to existing friendship networks. Initially, David Cavanagh spent most his time amongst 30 South Islanders who moved to Australia concurrently.<sup>48</sup> Over time this group dissipated, moving around Australia or back to New Zealand. Some Kiwi migrants socialised with fellow New Zealanders due to shared interests. Anne Leers wrote that she and her boyfriend gravitated towards other New Zealanders at the start of their time in Australia: ‘We all used to meet to watch the rugby and have hangis as we never like that Aussie Rules game much’.<sup>49</sup>

For some migrants, spending time with other New Zealanders provided a chance to reconnect to Kiwi ways of thinking and share their migration experiences. Daphne Park found aspects of Australian society unfamiliar so she valued her connections with other New Zealanders as an opportunity to debrief:

*Any Kiwis that would come to town that we would meet through friends or through church we would bring home or catch up with and I needed that. I loved it and I still do. I’ve just got some Kiwi friends who have arrived from Wellington and some I’ve met through school. We have the most wonderful links because we all get together and have a laugh about how organised and structured everybody else is and how you have to put a diary time in for a cuppa. And of course we do that too but we’ve got this mutual linking. I guess you seek them out.*<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Manying Ip, “Chinese New Zealanders: Old Settlers and New Immigrants,” in *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples?*, ed. Stuart Grief (Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1995), 195.

<sup>48</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>49</sup> Leers, written narrative.

<sup>50</sup> Park, interview.

Even casual connections with other New Zealanders provided a sense of kinship and shared experience. Trina Campano enjoyed talking about the differences between New Zealand and Australia with her Kiwi acquaintances:

*[I] didn't go and search them out and didn't go to anything Kiwi. It's not really my thing. But fun to talk to them: "What do you like and what don't you like?" And, "Would you have had this opportunity in New Zealand?"... We always kind of used to do the checks and balances thing.<sup>51</sup>*

Several migrants talked about having a special bond with other Kiwi co-workers. Sara Koller, who moved to Melbourne in 1983, wrote that she often graduated towards other New Zealanders in her area of work as they spoke 'the same language about getting things done and not sweating the small stuff'.<sup>52</sup> At other times the connection could be even more casual. Mildred Royce enjoyed bumping into Polynesian strangers on the street. Their raised eyebrow greeting gave her a sense of shared identity and connection.<sup>53</sup> Interaction with other New Zealanders, especially in the first few years after arrival, provided familiar social contexts and companionship. With other Kiwis there was an automatic shared cultural heritage which made socialising easy.

A very few migrants kept in touch with New Zealand news, events, and people in Australia via expatriate organisations. Helen Pemberton moved to Perth in 1968 with her husband and two children. When a local New Zealand Association was formed in 1969, the Pembertons joined and made many friends:

This gave Kiwis the opportunity to meet others, socialise, network, and support each other, and to introduce new found Australian friends to our culture. Social events included car rallies – a good way to explore our new environment – socials, and 'elevenes' on a Sunday morning when the brave among us would open our homes and gardens for drinking and socialising. The Māori Club was a spin off – and they organised the first ever hangi in the West. A disaster. Big time. No one realised that the sandy soil on the coastal plan would crack open and release the steam which should have been cooking the food. 200 hungry guests. And in a winery no less. Quite a night.<sup>54</sup>

Even if they were not part of a New Zealand organisation, some Kiwis attended Waitangi Day celebrations. Suzanna Belladonna attended New Zealand events in Perth when she could and found them exciting.<sup>55</sup> Waitangi Day celebrations were organised by New Zealand

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<sup>51</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>52</sup> Sara Koller, written narrative sent to author, 26 October 2009.

<sup>53</sup> Royce, interview.

<sup>54</sup> Pemberton, written narrative.

<sup>55</sup> Belladonna, interview.

expatriate organisations and over the years grew in size. For example, by 2010, the Waitangi family fun day on Queensland's Gold Coast attracted 10,000 attendees.<sup>56</sup> Paul Hamer notes that Australian Waitangi Day celebrations are slightly different to those in New Zealand. Rather than being political, they are an opportunity for expatriate New Zealanders (predominantly Māori) to gather and socialise.<sup>57</sup>

Māori migrants were more likely than Pākehā to join Māori organisations. But these organisations could be hampered by lack of funding and tribal politics. According to Paul Hamer, although Māori identify strongly as a distinct people group they do not class themselves as an Australian 'ethnic minority'. Their ethnic identity is still New Zealand based so instead of looking to Australian funding bodies they attempt (usually unsuccessfully) to source money from New Zealand. Fundraising is slow and complicated by tribal politics. As a result Māori have very few community centres or marae in Australia and teaching of Te Reo and Māori culture is limited. In spite of these barriers Māori have a number of community organizations, churches, festivals, radio programmes and news sources.<sup>58</sup> Adrienne Smith Heppel's family have worked over the last ten years to fund and build Australia's first marae on the Sunshine Coast because of their 'enormous need to connect' with their culture.

However, their marae is also a private business venture, as it needs to be self-funding.<sup>59</sup> Kapa Haka groups using rented spaces are usually the focal point of regional Māori organisations. Several Māori migrants in my study participated in Māori cultural groups in Australia. Ceris Nieuwland's Mum took her along to a Māori cultural club in Perth so she could learn



**Figure 25. Te Arohanui Māori Culture Group. Burswood, Perth 1994. Ceris Nieuwland aged 9 is second from left. Note the idealised New Zealand scenery of the backdrop. Courtesy of Ceris Nieuwland.**

<sup>56</sup> "Waitangi Day in Australia and Around the World," <http://www.suite101.com/content/celebration-of-waitangi-day-2010-a191977#ixzz1IW3RYhW8>, (accessed 4 April 2011).

<sup>57</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 115.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 79–81, 103.

<sup>59</sup> Te Moana Nui A Kiwi Marae. Adrienne Smith Heppel, written narrative sent to author, 30 July 2009.

about her heritage:

*The main reason was for the continued connection with our culture. Also just so we could socialise with other Māoris. And also I think Mum did it for us and for her as well; so she could socialise with other Māoris and so she could also maintain her culture.*<sup>60</sup>

Ceris and her family stopped attending after several years but Ceris rejoined the Māori culture group recently as she missed performing Māori waiata. Kapa



**Figure 26. Te Kahui Kotahi Māori Culture Group, Harmony Day, Hyde Park, Perth, 2010. Ceris is second from the left at back. Courtesy of Ceris Nieuwland.**

Haka groups were generally social in nature with limited teaching in Te Reo, and many members, like Ceris's family, came and went.

Some Māori migrants also joined organisations devoted to improving the situation of Māori in Australia. Several of the Māori I spoke to in Sydney were on the committee fundraising for a Sydney Marae. Toni Te Kowhai was passionate about this issue:

*I think that the Sydney Marae would be a great educational base at some stage for us to have the school right there. Te Reo would probably be only one of the things that we're looking at. You know, it's all those traditional things: the weaving, the Haka, the carvings, that our kids and our mokopunas need to be taught ... If we want for our culture to carry on, to exist, we need to be handing this stuff down to our kids.*<sup>61</sup>

Toni, along with several other Māori I talked to, was also involved in groups working to improve Māori welfare and crime statistics. Benjamin Pittman joined the Sydney Marae Committee and Māori Women's Welfare League in Sydney a few years after his arrival in 1979. Currently he is creating a cultural reclamation programme to help young Māori men avoid becoming involved in gangs.<sup>62</sup> George Clarke, a former superintendant of Sydney prisons, does cultural intervention work with Māori and Pacific Islanders inside prisons. Involvement in these groups offers a deep sense of purpose and connection with fellow members. But such focused group formation is unusual amongst Māori in Australia.

<sup>60</sup> Nieuwland, interview.

<sup>61</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

<sup>62</sup> Pittman, interview.

More recent Kiwi migrants visit expatriate websites which connect and inform New Zealanders in Australia. The biggest are the Australian branch of the Kea Organisation, the 'Māoris in Oz' website, the Stuff news website and 'Home Sweet As' online discussion forum. These organisations encourage informal networking, provide information, and allow migrants to compare their experiences in Australia. Kea helps organise events such as New Zealand film shows, seminars, and Waitangi Day celebrations. 'Māori in Oz' publishes monthly panui and provides information on Māori kai, Te Reo, whakapapa, and waiata. The website acts as a newspaper, advertising upcoming events and listing tangihanga (death notices). 'Home Sweet As' is a more informal site for Kiwi migrants made up of question and answer forums. The site includes threads on where to watch New Zealand sport, bands, and films in Australia. One forum has countless discussions on where to find the best fish and chips, Kiwi shops, New Zealand beer, and feijoas in different parts of Australia. Recent migrants ask if other Kiwis live nearby. The responses are generous: people leave their contact details, offer to organise BBQs, or invite newcomers to the local Kiwi pub. Other discussions centre around New Zealand news, politics, and current events. These networks are generally used during the first few years of migration and do not require commitment or regular participation. Only a few migrants in my sample actively used these forums due to their age and longevity in Australia.

Kiwis show low levels of groupness and organised national activity compared to other migrant groups. Migrants' friendships with other Kiwis often arose out of existing connections and shared interests. Especially in the early years, socialising with other Kiwis allowed migrants to share interests and evaluate Australian society in a safe, informal environment. Connecting with other Kiwis, even if fleetingly or online, provided migrants with a sense of commonality. But networks with other Kiwis usually did not constitute migrants' long-term major relational networks. Very few Kiwis were committed members of New Zealand organisations. Māori joined cultural groups more readily than Pākehā migrants. But even Māori cultural groups were often more social than educational, and hampered by lack of infrastructure and elders. The exceptions were those few Kiwi migrants who were heavily involved in formal organisations such as New Zealand clubs or Māori culture/welfare groups.

## Connecting with other migrants

Kiwis' relatively low levels of organised activity might suggest that they did not consider themselves to be migrants; but New Zealanders' fellow feeling with other migrants to Australia suggests otherwise. Many Kiwis identified with other newcomers to Australia. Although New Zealanders did not experience many of the problems faced by non-English speaking migrants in Australia, they still felt a kinship with them. Daphne Park explained how migration made her empathetic towards other migrants in her work as a behavioural psychologist:

*I would say [to the interpreter], Can you say to them "I have been here for two years myself. I've come from New Zealand". They would say, "Oh that's great but you speak English". And I would say, "Yes I do, but I do understand that it's different for you. But for me, I couldn't find the supermarket. I didn't know they were open 24 hours". And we'd have this nice sort of conversation.*<sup>63</sup>

The experience of moving to Australia sometimes inspired New Zealanders to help other migrants. Diana Harlow volunteered in a programme teaching Sudanese refugees in Melbourne how to speak English.<sup>64</sup> Elizabeth O'Connor and her daughters also had a new empathy for other migrants after moving to Melbourne. They became involved in asylum groups and protested Australia's incarceration of illegal immigrants.<sup>65</sup> In spite of their cultural similarity to native-born white Australians, a significant number of New Zealanders also strongly aligned themselves with other migrants.

Indeed, a number of migrants said most of their friends were not native Australians. Joanna Matheson's main group of friends outside NIDA in Sydney were all from Hong Kong. She thought they connected 'because we all had the fact that we weren't from Australia in common'.<sup>66</sup> Benjamin Pittman had a similar experience:

*I began to make Australian friends. I say 'Australian' as a general signifier: many were in fact born elsewhere in the US, Europe, South America, so-called 'New Australians'. The tendency to clump together is perhaps a common initial migrant experience. Being a migrant in Australia certainly made me appreciate the major challenges faced by those from other language and cultural backgrounds.*<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>64</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>65</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Matheson, interview.

<sup>67</sup> Pittman, interview.

Jim Ward, a locomotive driver who moved to Port Hedland with his family in 1973, made friends with other migrants on his mining site:

Soon we found other families living in the complex, many from the Balkans, Italians, many from the UK, all feeling a little homesick like us ... So we made friends fairly quickly. Most of these friends are friends to this day. We all share that common bond of being modern pioneers.<sup>68</sup>

Kiwis also often made friends with inter-state newcomers. For example, Diane Riley noted that most of her friends in Perth were newcomers to Western Australia as they tended to have similar attitudes about many things.<sup>69</sup> This pattern suggests that some New Zealand migrants did feel different to native Australians and naturally socialised with other newcomers to Australia.

## **Nuclear and extended family in the migration journey**

As Nancy Foner points out, migrants live out most of their lives in the context of families.<sup>70</sup> Unlike migrants who move to a new country which has different familial models of behaviour, most Kiwis in Australia did not face any significant challenges to their family culture.<sup>71</sup> Rather, family connections became the glue that linked Kiwis in to Australia more powerfully than any other type of network. Kiwis' relationships with Australian-born romantic partners, children, and grandchildren committed them to an Australian future.

In their written stories and oral history interviews, most migrants did not see their nuclear relationships as immediately relevant to their migration experience. Narrators usually mentioned the dates on which they married, divorced, remarried, or had children. Their brevity on this topic was certainly not due to a lack of emotion. After interviews I was told stories and shown treasured photographs of weddings, children, and grandchildren. But because of their perceived irrelevance to the migration story – or perhaps due to Kiwi self-possession – narrators usually glossed over experiences of romance and parenthood which occurred years after the initial migration. But of course, close family relationships were crucial to Kiwis' migration experience. As this chapter has already indicated, having children was a key way of integrating into Australian society and making friends. Likewise marrying

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<sup>68</sup> Jim Ward, written narrative sent to author, 5 October 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Diane Riley, written narrative sent to author, 17 September 2009.

<sup>70</sup> Nancy Foner, "The Immigrant Family: Cultural Legacies and Cultural Changes," *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (1997): 961.

<sup>71</sup> Foner studies how migrants' family and kinship patterns change after immigration. *Ibid.*

an Australian created many links with their family and friends. Migrants often felt their children had more opportunities in Australia or feared upsetting family by returning to New Zealand. When migrants considered their reasons for staying in Australia long term the significance of their nuclear relationships became clear.

For a considerable number of migrants, New Zealand family members already lived in Australia, or moved to Australia in subsequent years. Often these relationships increased in importance because they offered security in a new environment. While living in Newcastle, Alexander Clifton drove eight hours each way on weekends to visit his brother's family on the Gold Coast:

*Often spent the weekend up there and then drove back. And I'd do that every two or three months. So it was good to have that sort of family connection, a place to go. And he had lovely young kids. You know, without a family of my own it was nice to have that family connection back.*<sup>72</sup>

Angela Tewson settled in Australia partly because of her extended family network there. Three of her siblings lived in Sydney and they established strong bonds, holding frequent 'relo bashes' to celebrate birthdays and Christmases.<sup>73</sup> New Zealand migrants also often played a part in 'chain migration' networks. Just as Kiwis were encouraged to move by Australian contacts, once in Australia they in turn supported friends and family who were considering migration across the Tasman. Many of Alicia and Willie Matene's extended family followed them to Australia:

Over the years we have been the first stop for many family members who decided to move across the ditch. My 2 brothers and their families; many nieces and nephews and friends. Willie's sisters and their families. Above all we hope that our assistance has made their indoctrination into the Ozzie culture easier and more bearable.<sup>74</sup>

Migrants often provided temporary accommodation for parents or siblings moving to Australia. Siblings might go flatting together. Sometimes parents moved in with their children. Jill Hill migrated to Maroochydore in May 1990 with her two teenage children to escape her floundering marriage. Jill's father came to visit her in 1990 after his wife had died and loved it so much that he decided to migrate. He moved over aged 79 and lived with Jill's

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<sup>72</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Angela Tewson, written narrative sent to author, 27 August 2009.

<sup>74</sup> Matene, written narrative.



family for 13 years until he went into a nursing home.<sup>75</sup> Through such chain migrations Kiwi migrants' family networks from New Zealand were transplanted to Australia.

Because of cultural similarities, intermarriage between New Zealanders and Australians was common. Kiwis' relationships with Australian partners provided strong connections into new Australian social networks. Graeme Shirley, who came to Sydney to be with Celeste, his future wife, soon became part of her large Italian family. While he made a few friends through his hockey team, most of his friends



**Figure 27. Suzanne Belladonna (back left) enjoys an evening with her Sicilian family in Perth, 1984. Suzanne married Vince, an Italian Australian, and soon became close to his extended family. Courtesy of Suzanne Belladonna.**

were part of Celeste's existing social networks. Christine Reis moved to Sydney aged 19 in 1980. Initially she missed her parents, and struggled with anti-Kiwi discrimination in her first job. But after meeting her husband, Christine enjoyed spending time with his large family. She reflected that it 'was so nice being part of such a warm and caring family after being here without family for so long'.<sup>76</sup> Strong familial networks could provide migrants with essential emotional support and assistance.

Developing strong Australian family networks made New Zealand migrants more likely to settle in Australia permanently. Australian partners were usually unenthusiastic about moving to New Zealand. David Cavanagh reflected at the end of his interview that he felt more 'in tune' with Christchurch but would never return home since his Australian wife hated the South Island's cold weather.<sup>77</sup> Even when migrants did not plan to return to New Zealand having an Australian partner strengthened their decision. Tim King, a reporter in Melbourne, reflected that he stayed in Australia for many reasons: he liked his work, the people, and

<sup>75</sup> Jill Hill, written narrative sent to author, 15 September 2009.

<sup>76</sup> Reis, written narrative.

<sup>77</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

cheaper living costs. Getting married to a Melbourne born woman ‘who would not consider moving to New Zealand’ reinforced his decision to stay in Australia.<sup>78</sup>

Once migrants had children, considerations of the future consolidated the decision to remain in Australia. Many migrants felt that Australia provided better lifestyle prospects for their family. Neil Henry wrote that Australia gave his family opportunities they would not have achieved if they had stayed in New Zealand and proudly listed his children’s current careers.<sup>79</sup> Other migrants stayed to give their children a stable family life. Rosa Tanga had two children with her Australian partner but after several years together the couple separated. All Rosa wanted to do was return to her large close family in New Zealand, but she made the ‘huge decision’ to stay in Australia so that her children would continue to see their father:

*I knew if I came home he wouldn’t see the kids anymore. He’s all talk and no action on everything so I knew it wouldn’t matter what he said, he just wouldn’t see them. And, you know, just because I couldn’t live with him wasn’t any reason to make the kids do without their father. They need their father. So yeah, I stayed.<sup>80</sup>*

After six months in Australia, Barbara Criddle broke up with her New Zealand boyfriend and started a serious relationship with another man who later became her husband. He already had two children:

Once our relationship became serious I committed to stay living in Perth until the children were finished high school ... the deal was that we could go back to NZ once the kids were old enough for us to leave. This is how I ended up staying in Australia longer than first anticipated.<sup>81</sup>

Many migrants were reluctant to put their children through the painful process of moving. Once their children were settled and happy in Australia it required strong motivation to leave Australia.

Even once children became independent, parents were unlikely to leave, particularly once grandchildren were born. Children brought up in Australia from a young age usually considered Australia home which made them unlikely to return to New Zealand. Kiwi migrants were loath to leave behind an imagined future with beloved nuclear family. Cheryl Walkington reflected, ‘I would still like to move back as I miss my family but both our daughters are settled with Australian partners and I would never leave them or our

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<sup>78</sup> King, written narrative.

<sup>79</sup> Neil Henry, written narrative sent to author, 11 September 2009.

<sup>80</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>81</sup> Barbara Criddle, written narrative sent to author, 12 September 2009.

granddaughter'.<sup>82</sup> For Ron Roil, the situation is simple: 'With both of our daughters settled here with children, our future will always be in Australia'.<sup>83</sup> Even those who did move back to New Zealand could face the problem of their grown children remaining behind in Australia. Elizabeth O'Conner and her family returned to New Zealand in 2004; however her two eldest daughters remained behind in Melbourne. This was difficult for Elizabeth:

*My daughters are there [Melbourne] and I miss them terribly. And I've kind of made a promise to myself that I will be there if they have children and they want me to help them. So that means I would move back. And I'm OK with that. It's been hard to have split our family and I regret that hugely in some ways. I mean in lots of ways, in many many ways, in every way. And I know that if I knew what I know now, I wouldn't have done it.*<sup>84</sup>

The price of leaving two of her children behind in Melbourne was too high for Elizabeth in retrospect. For those Kiwis who wanted to return to New Zealand, strong ties to an Australian partner, children, and grandchildren made this a very difficult, and in most cases, unlikely, prospect.

## Conclusions

A striking feature of Kiwi migrants' relationships in Australia is that they generally connected into a range of different networks easily. Many Kiwis had existing Australian contacts that helped them out in their first few weeks in Australia. Kiwis found it easy to make friends with Australians as their language, interests and lifestyle were very similar. Joining groups which enabled them to meet Australians with shared interests and beliefs was the most successful method for making friends. Most Kiwis also reported a sense of camaraderie with other Kiwi migrants, even if these networks were loose and temporary. In addition some Kiwis reported a feeling of commonality with other migrants. Most New Zealand migrants were able to enter into at least one if not several, social, neighbourhood, and family networks, which helped them feel connected into their new country.

However, not all of these relationships were equally strong or emotionally satisfying. Weak ties with initial contacts provided valuable assistance but could be short-lived. While most Kiwis made friends easily, some struggled; children were vulnerable to teasing and women could lament the loss of deep friendships which were not quickly replaced. A sense of fellow feeling with other Kiwis or migrants did not guarantee close friendships. Indeed, most Kiwis

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<sup>82</sup> Walkington, written narrative.

<sup>83</sup> Ron Roil, written narrative sent to author, 20 August 2009.

<sup>84</sup> O'Connor, interview.

(with the exception of some Māori) did not become involved in specifically Kiwi groups. New Zealand migrants' easy interaction with different aspects of Australian society meant they did not need to create strong ethnic networks. Although regular contact with Australians through group activities provided company, it usually took a few years for Kiwis to create lasting close friendships through these avenues. Integration into Australian families provided the strongest support networks but once again not all Kiwis created or linked into Australian families. Indeed, a few New Zealanders never did create supportive enduring relational networks. As Chapter Nine reveals, some Kiwi return migrants left Australia because of relationships deficits or problems. Kiwi migrants' career and personal successes mattered little unless they had others to share them with.

But most New Zealand migrants did form meaningful relationships. Weak and strong networks both had their uses. According to Granovetter, a large number of weak ties provide useful connections and access to networks.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, many Kiwis benefitted from weak ties with existing Australian contacts who acted as guides and hosts in the early days of migration. Informal connections with other New Zealanders helped migrants retain their New Zealand identity, share Kiwi interests such as rugby, and compare experiences of migration to Australia. But Kiwis also needed strong relationships to fulfil their emotional and relational needs. Kiwis successfully made good friends when they connected with others who they felt a shared interest. As Louise Ryan's recent research on Polish migrants in London reveals, mutual interests, careers, educational backgrounds, interests, and ambitions encourage close friendship more than shared ethnicity.<sup>86</sup> Kiwis made close friends when they met others with whom they had something important in common: a career, sporting passion, religious belief, familial stage of life, or feeling of difference. These close friendships provided support, practical help, and a sense of connection. As this chapter indicates, migrants' relationships changed over time. While existing contacts and other Kiwis were often important in the early stages of migration, it was developing close friendships and family ties with Australians which gave Kiwis a long-term sense of belonging.

Ultimately migrants' strongest networks were their relationships with Australian romantic partners, extended family, children, and grandchildren. An Australian-based family almost

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<sup>85</sup> Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties."

<sup>86</sup> Ryan, "Migrants' Social Networks and Weak Ties," 721.

always tied New Zealanders to Australia. Kiwis were often unwilling to leave (even if they wanted to) when their nearest and dearest were loyal Australians. Once Kiwis had children and grandchildren who identified as Australian, settlement usually became irrevocably permanent. This was because migrants now had to factor future possibilities into their decision making. Kiwis' aspirations for their children's success and hopes of being involved grandparents depended on staying in Australia. As this chapter reveals, migrants' familial relationships continued to heavily influence their migration experiences and decisions.

## Chapter Seven: Still a New Zealander; Belonging and Identity

Julie Podstolski and Matthew Clements migrated to Sydney in March 1982 after finishing their studies at the University of Canterbury. Matthew is an engineer and Julie is an artist. The couple's joint interview in Fremantle, WA, revealed their changing feelings about missing New Zealand and belonging in Australia.<sup>1</sup>



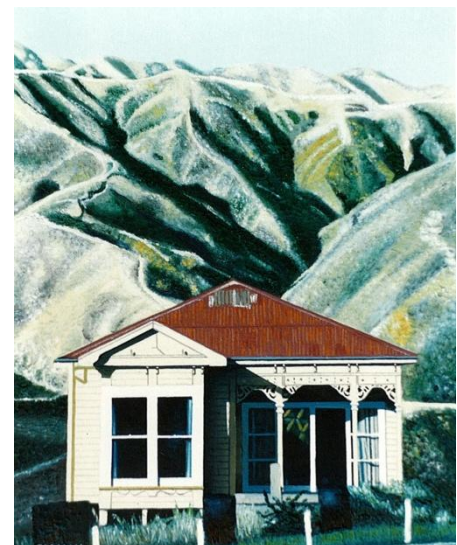
**Figure 28. Matthew and Julie in their Fremantle home, next to a painting by Julie's New Zealand sister-in-law. Photo by author.**

Julie struggled for years with homesickness. She missed her family, especially when her daughters were born, but also longed for New Zealand landscapes. The places of New Zealand haunted her dreams and paintings:

*JP I often used to have these dreams, where I was in Australia, but I could just look over and there was Karori.<sup>2</sup> You know I could actually see it. I missed it so much...*

*RB Let's just explore that a little bit more. Was there anything that sparked your homesickness? And were there specific things apart from your family that you were homesick for?*

*JP Yes, that's a good question. Because I'm an artist I really take note of my surroundings. And what I find beautiful are the physical characteristics of New Zealand. So for instance the hills of Wellington. The hills and the harbour, the sea, the mountains of the South Island, the cold clear light. So many of those things. And ... all my art was landscapes in the past. To me, I just*



**Figure 29. "Suburb's End" by Julie Podstolski. Julie did this oil painting in the mid 80s when she was still very homesick for NZ. She wrote 'These are the hills of Karori but in front is an old house which was actually in a paddock in a different part of Wellington. I used to make up a lot of dream landscapes back then – superimpose one thing on another. This is very typical of my 'longing for NZ' art.' Courtesy of Julie Podstolski.**

<sup>1</sup> All information and quotations from Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>2</sup> Karori is a Wellington hill suburb.

*didn't find Australia beautiful. For a start, in Sydney – I mean Sydney's got some beautiful areas – but everything's built up. I really missed the areas without houses on them or without buildings. And even when we lived in Coogee I used to go down to the beach and I used to think "Why aren't I happy here? This is the beach, you know. I live right by the beach and here I am on the beach". It took me a while to realise because everything around this beach is buildings; nothing but buildings. So for a while I actually used to travel back to New Zealand on what I called photography trips. I'd go and take millions of photos and then come back and paint them. In that way I could be transporting myself to New Zealand. So yes, it wasn't just the people. I actually felt like – I used to say this to Matt – "I feel like I'm having an affair with New Zealand. Like it's New Zealand that I love but I'm stuck here in Australia, but I just want to be in New Zealand".*

Matt and Julie were fortunate to be able to keep close connections with New Zealand by visiting often. They travelled to New Zealand to see kin and introduce their three daughters to New Zealand's landscapes. Julie planned adventures based around specific holiday homes in beautiful South Island destinations. Matt agreed with Julie that visits to New Zealand were special. He reflected:

*There's definitely something about your homeland ... I've been to other beautiful places which are as beautiful in aspects as New Zealand. Switzerland for instance; it's fantastic and I'd love to go back there. But there's something about your own land, particularly the area that you associate with. I think the area that I closely associate with is the Canterbury mountains. If we ever had a chance at home we'd always go across the plains to the mountains and I couldn't wait. No matter where we went it was always fantastic.*

The couple still visit New Zealand to enjoy the landscape and spend time with family and friends.

But over time Matt and Julie identified Australia as home, especially after they bought their first house in 1992. After many years in Australia, Julie began painting Australian landscapes of Sydney and Fremantle. And over time, her artistic affinity for New Zealand was superseded by her fascination with Japanese and Parisian cityscapes. Matt reflected that although for many years they considered retiring to New Zealand this idea has now disappeared. Building their own home in Fremantle strengthened their Australian roots. Julie agreed that home was now Australia:

*Yes. Home is here. This is not politically correct but I felt a little disappointed with New Zealand last year when I went back. It just seemed – maybe because it was winter and usually when we go we go on summer holidays so it's a different feel, and also ... it was completely family based so it was slightly different – but Christchurch, you know, I went walking along Christchurch and Wellington and I saw so many shops that seemed to be shut or closed down ... Altogether I just found the centre of Wellington and Christchurch a bit depressed maybe, a bit dismal and kind of grey. When I got back here it was a relief ... to be back in the vibrancy again.*

Matt also felt Australia was home although his sense of belonging was based around his family, not a place:

*Yeah I think I call this home. I mean home for me has always been where you [Julie] are. So it's where my family is. I mean we've built this house, we live here, this is home. You know I've less and less associated home with a country or piece of land. It's really where the family is. And I actually consider myself to be an international citizen. I almost don't belong to – I certainly don't have a great kind of thing, "Australia, Australia". In fact I find this whole nationalistic thing a bit sort of bizarre. And although I do identify quite strongly with New Zealand I don't have really that connection with New Zealand either, of being "I'm a Kiwi, I'm all for New Zealand".*

Julie ended the interview by reflecting that she and Matt were now literally 'completely New Zealand and Australian'. Matt was diagnosed with kidney failure in 1994. In 2007 the couple took part in a revolutionary Western Australia donor swap program. Julie donated one of her kidneys to an Australian, and in return Matt received an Australian kidney.

## **National longing, belonging, and identification.**

This chapter explores New Zealand migrants' changing feelings of national longing, belonging, and self identification. Migration theorists often study migrants' national, cultural, ethnic, or racial identities. In the following section I consider aspects of Kiwi migrants' feelings about their relationship to New Zealand and Australia, and how this affects their sense of self. However, I avoid the term identity as it often used imprecisely or in a way that reifies concepts. As Brubaker and Cooper argue:

Conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness and cohesion, all self understandings and self identifications in the idiom of "identity" saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary.<sup>3</sup>

I also avoid the term 'national identity' to describe Kiwis' characterization of their national self. National identity is commonly viewed as an entity; a collection of commonly held attitudes, practices, and beliefs. For example, Anna Green describes New Zealand national identity as egalitarian, informal, hardworking, ingenious, sports loving, and accepting of Māori culture.<sup>4</sup> Green traces how her participants maintain or revise their national identity in view of these cultural traits.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately this approach covers up Kiwi migrants' diverse

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<sup>3</sup> Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, "Beyond "Identity"," *Theory and Society* 29, no. 1 (2000): 2.

<sup>4</sup> Green, "New Zealand Migrants to Australia," 192–3.

<sup>5</sup> Green argues that New Zealand migrants in Australia retain a strong national identity in spite of their cultural similarities to Australians. They are overtly patriotic and have a more romanticised nostalgic view of life in New Zealand but are also more like to acknowledge negative factors about life in New Zealand as this justifies their migration. *Ibid.*, 195.



range of feelings towards New Zealand and Australia. Migrants' national loyalties depend on their particular migration experience and naturally alter over time. It is also difficult to argue that Kiwis share a national identity, because, as the previous chapter indicated, Kiwis in Australia have low levels of groupness.

Rather than defining Kiwi's national identity this chapter takes a new approach and examines the *ways* in which New Zealand migrants displayed and maintained connections with New Zealand but also expressed feelings of belonging in Australia. Richard Jenkins argues that identities are produced and reproduced by individuals' interactions in informal and formal institutionalised contexts: homes, families, politics, social groups, and economic markets.<sup>6</sup> And Anthony Cohen explains that the outcome of these interactions is culture. Culture is the way people make meaning of the world, and 'its vehicle is the symbol'.<sup>7</sup> Thus this chapter focuses on the outward cultural symbols (landscapes, food, objects, and events) which highlight Kiwi migrants' evolving feelings of longing, belonging, and identification. This approach reveals variation in New Zealanders' feelings about national identification rather than measuring migrants against a static definition of New Zealand national identity.

Most Kiwis in Australia missed their homeland, and found Australia strange, but over time migrants felt less homesick and more settled in Australia. Their changing outlook is reflected in their attitudes towards specific locations, objects, and events. Migrants' childhood memories, awareness of family history, and nostalgia for the life they left behind meant they missed New Zealand landscapes and culture. Over time homesickness lessened but New Zealanders remained connected to places, rituals and material objects which symbolised home. Migrants kept Kiwi objects in their homes as a reminder of their national heritage and visited Kiwi shops to buy New Zealand food. Most fervently supported New Zealand sports teams. Many Kiwis returned to New Zealand to enjoy specific landscapes. But Kiwi migrants also came to feel connected to their new country. Gradually they infused Australian material culture and places with new memories and associations. Migrants grew to accept, even love, Australian landscapes, flora, and fauna. The decision to take Australian citizenship marked an important change for some New Zealand migrants. Over time, many New Zealanders felt they belonged in Australia, even if their longing for New Zealand never entirely faded.

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Jenkins, "Categorization: Identity, Social Process and Epistemology," *Current Sociology* 48, no. 3 (2000): 14.

<sup>7</sup> Cohen, "Culture as Identity," 196.

Kiwi migrants' feelings of national longing, belonging, and self identification varied considerably. Through recognisably Kiwi possessions and activities some migrants reemphasised their usually invisible national origin to Australians. Often these migrants refused to take Australian citizenship. A few narrators became Australians, both legally and emotionally, distancing themselves from their New Zealand past. But many Kiwis in Australia distinguished between belonging and national identification, identifying as New Zealanders even after gaining Australian citizenship. Most narrators stated that although Australia is their family home they are still New Zealanders.

## Longing

### *Landscape and place*

Many New Zealand migrants in Australia missed the New Zealand landscape. Migration geographers argue that migration history is shaped around interaction with places. Ángels Pascual-de-Sans, a Spanish geographer, writes that people develop a geographical identification with specific places of preference. Most migrants will have a few (often just one) places which act as a central reference point.<sup>8</sup> As Tim Jetson argues, a landscape is not just scenery; it includes interaction between people, their associated cultural baggage, and a specific geographic location.<sup>9</sup> Migrants' attachments to places often stem from their spiritual, nostalgic, and genealogical connections to particular settings.<sup>10</sup> Kiwi migrants in Australia longed for specific places associated with their life history. Their homesickness for New Zealand landscapes was inextricably linked to nostalgia for a happy upbringing or ancestral connections. Matthew O'Brien missed the New Zealand countryside. As he elaborated it became clear that this longing was linked to memories of his childhood in rural Christchurch:

*I guess it's just your memories of what you did when you were a kid and what you used to do. And New Zealand's just beautiful. We used to go down to the rivers and everything when we were kids and just lie on the lilo and go down the rivers and that sort of thing. I guess New Zealand's just simple. I guess it just seems more fresher than here.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ángels Pascual-de-Sans, "Sense of Place and Migration Histories: Idiotopy and Idiotope," *Area* 36, no. 4 (December 2004): 352, 356.

<sup>9</sup> Tim Jetson, "'They Had a Real Appreciation of the Area': Feelings of Attachment to the Central Highlands and the Arthur-Pieman Areas of Tasmania," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 31 (2009): 14.

<sup>10</sup> C. Goderich and K. Sampson, "A Place for Community," in *Making Sense of Place*, ed. Frank Vanclay, Matthew Higgins, and Adam Blackshaw (Canberra: National Museum of Australia Press, 2008), 260.

<sup>11</sup> O'Brien, interview.

Migrants missed locations where they had lived, worked, or spent happy family holidays. Māori narrators in particular often had a strong spiritual connection to New Zealand places.



**Figure 30. George Clarke's family farm, showing the historic homestead, in Kennedy Bay. Courtesy of George Clarke.**

One of the participants, George Clarke, is still Chairman of the Whanau Trust for his family's land in Kennedy Bay, Coromandel. Over the years he has flown back regularly to maintain the property and chair the Trust's meetings. He misses the scenery for its beauty but also its associated 500 years of genealogy.<sup>12</sup> For many migrants, places associated with family memories have an added emotional pull. As always, relationships play an

integral role in migrants' continuing connections with New Zealand.

Kiwi migrants' longings for New Zealand places were also influenced by historical idealisations of the New Zealand landscape. Although settlers transformed New Zealand into agricultural grasslands, simultaneously local colonial literature celebrated the native landscape as a romantic manifestation of the sacred.<sup>13</sup> New Zealand tourism, conservation, and literary groups promoted New Zealand's purity, native flora and fauna, water, and wild isolation.<sup>14</sup> Artists, tourist publicists, and popular culture particularly celebrated mountains as representing New Zealand.<sup>15</sup> Kiwi migrants reflected this cultural heritage by longing for New Zealand's greenness, mountainous terrain, and compact nature. Mildred Royce missed the verdant bush of her homeland:

*I think I would still prefer New Zealand's greenery. For some reason it's just cooler and greener. I remember when I flew back into New Zealand for the first time after not being in a*

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<sup>12</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>13</sup> See Tom Brooking and Eric Pawson, *Seeds of Empire: The Environmental Transformation of New Zealand* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011); Julian Kuzma, "New Zealand Landscape and Literature, 1890–1925," *Environment and History* 9 (2003): 458.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of New Zealand's environmental history see Paul Star, "Humans and the Environment in New Zealand, c. 1800 to 2000," in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, ed. Giselle Byrnes (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Eric Pawson, "The Meanings of Mountains," in *Environmental Histories of New Zealand*, ed. Eric Pawson and Tom Brooking (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002).

*green country when I was in Australia. You know, this time, my eyes hurt. I felt like it was so green, it was just soaking into my eyes.*<sup>16</sup>

Several Kiwis mentioned the experience of returning by aeroplane and being struck by New Zealand's greenness. Others commented on their longing for lush native bush, pohutakawa trees, and ferns. Kiwis also missed New Zealand's lakes, streams, harbours, and mountains. Mike Gammon in Perth missed the Hauraki Gulf.<sup>17</sup> Rosa Tanga in Ingram longed for Wellington Harbour.<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth O'Connor and her husband felt the absence of mountains in Melbourne:

*One thing I did really towards the end notice about the landscape of Melbourne was its unrelenting flatness and it drove me mad. I think as a New Zealander there's something in your spirit that longs for the hills. Because I grew up in Wellington so there's hills there. We have mountains wherever you go; there is some uplifting of your eyes.*<sup>19</sup>

Elizabeth and her husband also missed the New Zealand landscape's variation within a small area. Migrants often pined for New Zealand's ecological and geographical diversity in comparison to Australia's vast unchanging landscapes.

New Zealanders visiting their homeland often consciously fulfilled their longing for specific landscapes. A few migrants talked about going back to New Zealand to feel refreshed by the beautiful scenery and simpler lifestyle. Daphne Park returned to New Zealand to be 're-earthed':

*I go back to get re-earthed and to get away from all the glitz and glamour and speed of it, and to feel that peace of Kiwi-land. And then to come back energised to manage there ... you're going back to a simple slower beautiful world where nature and the environment are less affected, less built up.*<sup>20</sup>

Migrants who strongly missed the New Zealand landscape sometimes depicted returning as a spiritual experience. The first time Elizabeth O'Connor's family visited New Zealand they travelled down the South Island by the Southern Alps. When Elizabeth saw Aoraki Mount Cook she burst into tears '*because I hadn't seen them for so long and it was just like here they are and they're still waiting for me*'.<sup>21</sup> Returning to New Zealand renewed her 'profound

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<sup>16</sup> Royce, interview.

<sup>17</sup> Gammon, written narrative.

<sup>18</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>19</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>21</sup> O'Connor, interview.

spiritual connection' to the land. Benjamin Pittman also returns to New Zealand to renew his connection to his farm in Northland:

*Northland is a very important part of me and so whenever I go home ... and walk in the bush on my farm and touch base with all my trees and different things, things that I grew up with, it's a bit like a recharge of the batteries. For me it's got, obviously, very great spiritual significance. It's the seat of my identity.*<sup>22</sup>

Benjamin's reflection invokes the Māori concept of *turangawaewae*; a home place where we feel especially empowered and connected.<sup>23</sup> The migrants who longed for New Zealand's beautiful scenery from Australia were those most likely to emphasise their connection to the land on their visits to New Zealand.

### ***Food***

Many Kiwis also missed New Zealand food and satisfied this nostalgic longing where possible by finding New Zealand products in Australia. This is a common migrant experience. Brigitte Bönisch-Brednich argues that eating becomes very important when life has undergone decisive changes. In her oral history on German migration to New Zealand she found that food became an ongoing topic of conversation. German immigrants focused on differences between the two food cultures and lamented the absence of traditional German food in New Zealand cuisine. By contrast, New Zealand and Australia have very similar food cultures. Supermarkets in the two countries stock many of the same products and brands. The main difference is Australia's more diverse ethnic cuisine which New Zealanders appreciated rather than disliked. In spite of increased choices and familiar products, many migrants longed for specific 'Kiwi' food. Some migrants missed New Zealand's seafood. David Cavanagh longed for oysters, whitebait, and crayfish.<sup>24</sup> Others missed New Zealand's dairy products. Patricia Furniss wrote that Australia's dairy products are 'mostly rubbish' and admitted that her husband 'laughs about how ex-pat NZers chatting together will always start to whine about the milk and cheese and ice-cream eventually'.<sup>25</sup> One of the few things Alexander Clifton yearned for was his favourite Kiwi treats: '*Missed New Zealand lollies. New Zealand confectionary is just superb. The first time I tasted Australian cream I thought*

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<sup>22</sup> Pittman, interview.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Royal Te Ahukaramū, "Papatūānuku - the land - Tūrangawaewae - a place to stand," Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, updated 1 Mar 2009, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land/5>, (accessed 10 January 2012).

<sup>24</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>25</sup> Patricia Furniss, written narrative sent to author, 19 October 2009.

*“This is just crap. You call this cream?” Strawberries and tomatoes’.*<sup>26</sup> Daphne Park missed something as simple as the Maggi onion soup mix which New Zealanders combine with reduced cream to make dip for chips or crudités. On her most recent trip back to New Zealand Daphne’s Kiwi friends asked her to bring back 20 packets of soup mix.<sup>27</sup>

For many migrants, purchasing Kiwi products was a nostalgic experience. The sensory experience of eating Kiwi products provided a trip down memory lane. Vanessa Farrell recalled her recent experience finding New Zealand products in Melbourne: ‘We recently discovered some Lolly Shops with NZ products – things I had totally forgotten about, K-Bars, Perky Nanas. The smell was so wonderful. Chocolate Fish, Buzz Bars, Pinky Bars. If I hadn’t seen and tasted them I never would have remembered!’<sup>28</sup> Vanessa’s rediscovery of Kiwi sweets took her memories back to her New Zealand childhood. Indeed, junk food was the most commonly missed item of food. Migrants reminisced about pineapple lumps, Whittaker’s peanut slabs, L&P, Bluebirds potato chips, Just Juice, Krispies biscuits, hokey pokey ice-cream, K-bars and Pinky Bars. The reason for this is perhaps that these items have distinct wrapping and are associated with childhood treats and celebrations.

Many migrants also mentioned visiting ‘Kiwi Shops’ around Australia. There are a significant number of New Zealand themed shops in different parts of Australia; several at least in all the major cities. For example, in the Werribee suburb of Melbourne the ‘Just Kiwi’ shop stocks ‘a comprehensive range of Kiwiana including L&P, Rashuns, Fresh Up, Pixie Caramels, Buzz Bars, Toasties, Sizzlers, Maketu Pies, Kiwi Ice Cream, All Black merchandise, Super Rugby Merchandise, Swanndri, Pounamu, and Artwork’.<sup>29</sup> Diana Harlow and her daughter loved visiting this shop and buying treats such as Krispies biscuits.<sup>30</sup> Matthew O’Brien in Perth visited the local Kiwi shop to procure Fresh Up, Bluebirds potato chips, Pinky Bars, and Raro.<sup>31</sup> Migrants did not visit these shops regularly but rather visited occasionally when they wanted a taste of home. When Paul and Rosanna McEvedey felt ‘desperately homesick’ they would buy New Zealand ice-cream, chocolate fish, and

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<sup>26</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Farrell, written narrative.

<sup>29</sup> Just Kiwi, ‘About Us’, <http://www.justkiwi.com.au/AboutUs.aspx> (accessed 4 April 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>31</sup> O’Brien, interview.

pineapple lumps at a Kiwi shop in Perth.<sup>32</sup> These Kiwi shops reveal the large number of New Zealanders in all parts of Australia who foster their connection to New Zealand by purchasing New Zealand food and memorabilia.

### ***New Zealand objects***

Migrants also retained links with New Zealand by displaying Kiwi themed objects in their homes. Academics study objects in a number of ways. One approach, often used by museums, documents the tangible and intangible aspects of objects in order to capture their significance.<sup>33</sup> Another approach deconstructs the meaning of objects as consumer items in order to reveal meanings such as the socioeconomic status of the owner.<sup>34</sup> Oral historians often use objects such as photos or family heirlooms in interviews to spark memories and prompt reflections on generational values.<sup>35</sup> While I did not specifically use any of these approaches, over the course of the interviews in migrants' homes I became aware that many narrators used New Zealand objects to demonstrate their 'Kiwiness'.

A number of migrants loyally bought New Zealand-made wherever possible. When Jonathan Archer built his house in Melbourne he put in Fisher and Paykel whiteware, Masport gas fires, and Athena showers. He reflected, *'If there's a New Zealand product on the market and it's well made, it looks good, it's comparable, I tend to buy it. I support New Zealand in that sense'*.<sup>36</sup> Other migrants drank New Zealand wines. Such items were not necessarily



recognisably Kiwi but supporting New Zealand businesses let migrants express allegiance to their homeland.

Migrants' most common New Zealand home decorations were New Zealand paintings, photos, Māori carvings, and All Black memorabilia. Daphne Park's New Zealand art reminded her of home and proclaimed her national heritage

**Figure 31. Wooden Kiwi in John Husband's Canberra home. Photo by author.**

<sup>32</sup> Paul McEvedey, interview.

<sup>33</sup> For a view on the changing place of objects in museums and the importance of narratives see Elaine Heumann Gurian, "What Is the Object of This Exercise? A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums," *Humanities Research* 8, no. 1 (2001).

<sup>34</sup> An example of this approach is Daniel Miller, ed. *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (London: UCL Press, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> Janis Wilton, "Telling Objects: Material Culture and Memory in Oral History Interviews," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 30 (2008).

<sup>36</sup> Archer, interview.



to visitors:

*There's a couple of koru statues round the corner there, abstract art koru. I find I love those, not only for their memory and for where we were at the time, but because they're really interesting for people who are from here [Australia]. I think it helps them understand a little more about where we're coming from too, where I'm coming from. And the kids really like them too because they're normal in New Zealand. So we try and bring them back here: fish hook and the koru and the stone sculpture, paintings. Any artwork that's a place that we've been to that's important; we'll try and capture. Just small bits and pieces, and they mean something.*<sup>37</sup>



**Figure 32.** Tony Harris in his office with New Zealand flag, 2010. Photo by author.

All Blacks memorabilia was another popular home decoration, particularly for men. Tony Harris' house had no appearance of belonging to a New Zealander until he showed me his study which was decorated with All Blacks flags, posters, a framed jersey, and various other rugby themed items. Indeed a few migrants, like Tony, had one New Zealand themed room. Trina Campano's spare room in Sydney was 'the paua shell room'.<sup>38</sup> Gayla Wilson's husband had a room filled with Māori carvings and artefacts.<sup>39</sup> Migrants displayed these objects (even when they had

no Māori heritage, or were not fervent rugby fans) because they were recognisably New Zealand cultural symbols.

Kiwi migrants also took New Zealand symbols out into Australian society. When I was travelling around Perth I was struck at the number of New Zealand-themed bumper stickers on cars. Some migrants, both Pākehā and Māori, wore pounamu (greenstone) pendants. Male migrants might wear All Blacks or New Zealand Super Fourteen rugby shirts. Trina Campano often wore a koru or buzzy bee necklace in



**Figure 33.** Graeme Shirley wearing greenstone pendant, 2010. Note the Māori carving on the wall of his home. Photo by author.

<sup>37</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>39</sup> Gayla Wilson, interview by author, Canberra, ACT, Australia, 20 April 2010.



Sydney which prompted people to ask if she was a Kiwi.<sup>40</sup> Ceris Nieuwland described the way her family signalled their New Zealand heritage:

*We have Kiwi key rings. I've got an All Blacks sticker on my car. My brother had a Tribes sticker on the back of his ute. And you see it everywhere in Australia too. New Zealanders are just so proud I think generally as a people to be New Zealanders. Yeah, we've got that New Zealand flag there. We've got bits of New Zealand statues around the house. I've got a greenstone that I like. I like paua earrings. I love going down – they have a few Kiwi shops around Perth – I like to just go down and get jewellery, or I've got a New Zealand beanie. My sister's got a New Zealand scarf. Just little bits and pieces that we just wear with pride really.*<sup>41</sup>

Such behaviour is described by Herbert J. Gans as 'symbolic ethnicity' where 'love for and pride in a tradition ... can be felt without having to be incorporated in everyday behaviour'.<sup>42</sup> Although Kiwis were virtually indistinguishable from Australians, many New Zealanders displayed cultural symbols to signal their pride in being Kiwi.

### ***Sport: supporting New Zealand***

One of the most important informal public ways Kiwi migrants identified as New Zealanders was supporting New Zealand sports teams. Although New Zealand and Australia have a hidden history of Australasian cooperation in the global sporting arena, trans-Tasman sporting rivalry has remained fierce and increased over the last few decades. The professionalization and globalization of sporting codes has led to higher stakes, more frequent games, and greater commercialisation of trans-Tasman matches. As viewing figures increase, matches have become more of a national concern. New Zealand with its underdog status and fewer sporting global sporting successes puts great emphasis on trans-Tasman matches.<sup>43</sup> Almost all New Zealanders in Australia support New Zealand sports teams against Australia. Only a few migrants changed their allegiance to Australia. Jeanne Cashman used to barrack for New Zealand teams but after 20 years in Australia realised she was now supporting Australian teams. This realisation prompted her to take out Australian citizenship.<sup>44</sup> Some migrants vacillated in their loyalty, supporting Australian teams at the regional level, but New Zealand teams at the international level. Elizabeth O'Conner was a fervent Fitzroy rugby league fan but supported the All Blacks against the Wallabies. Katya

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<sup>40</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>41</sup> Nieuwland, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2, no. 1 (1979): 9.

<sup>43</sup> Rosemary Baird and Peter J. Hempenstall, Chapter Eight, "Playing Together," in *Remaking the Tasman World*, co-authored by Philippa Mein Smith, Peter J. Hempenstall, and Shaun Goldfinch (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 2008), 162, 183.

<sup>44</sup> Cashman, interview.

Seale hedged her bets: 'I love it when the All Blacks (or any Kiwi team) beat the Aussies, but I'm firmly in the Aussie camp when we play against any other country – 2 bob each way if you like!'<sup>45</sup> But the vast majority of Kiwis continued to support and follow New Zealand's representative sports teams.

Rugby Union, the one sporting code where New Zealand is historically stronger than Australia, inspires great devotion from Kiwi migrants in Australia. Loyalty to the All Blacks allows migrants to display their New Zealand heritage publically. Hamer observed that Kiwis in Australia are so devoted to the All Blacks (union) and Kiwis (league) rugby teams that matches played in Sydney and Brisbane often appear more like home games for New Zealand than Australia.<sup>46</sup> Many narrators supported the All Blacks and where possible attended games in Australia and New Zealand. Maureen Stronach wrote that she and her partner 'have stayed true to the All Blacks and go to as many games here as we can'.<sup>47</sup> Matthew Clements joined up with Fox television so he could watch New Zealand Super Fourteen rugby matches:

*I only joined up with Fox so I could watch the Super Fourteen. I watch all the New Zealand games you know (laughs) ... We have a team in Western Australia, the Western Force, now. And I joined and became a member but it's just not the same thing. I mean I would prefer to watch the New Zealand teams play. So there's something that you never manage to lose of your New Zealandness.*<sup>48</sup>

Even Matthew O'Brien, who referees professionally for Australian rugby union was unswervingly loyal to New Zealand rugby, stating, '*All Blacks: that's it till you die*'.<sup>49</sup> Watching New Zealand sport was also a chance for New Zealanders to spend time together in a common patriotic interest. When Murray Hunt worked on Western Australia mine sites, all the Kiwis on site early followed rugby matches:

*In actual fact some of the Kiwi boys used to have videotapes sent over of rugby games and stuff like that, so if there was a test match on you always knew a couple of days later someone would have the tape of it. We sort of had a camaraderie amongst the Kiwis with that; we'd all go to someone's house and watch the tape and drink beer and carry on.*<sup>50</sup>

Toni Te Kowhai has a big bookcase filled with All Black books which her Kiwi guests enjoy looking over:

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<sup>45</sup> Katya Seale, written narrative sent to author, 17 August 2009.

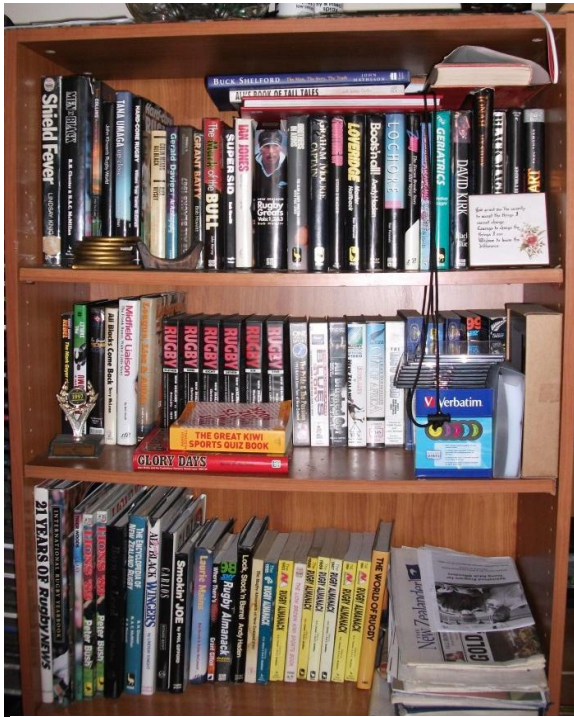
<sup>46</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 127.

<sup>47</sup> Maureen Stronach, written narrative sent to author, 20 August 2009.

<sup>48</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>49</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>50</sup> Hunt, interview.



**Figure 34. Toni Te Kowhai's rugby book collection. Photo by author.**

*They're a pain to take with you when you start moving houses but we definitely like having them in the house. A lot of our visitors will talk about a particular player because we always reminisce over a few drinkies. And then we pull out the books and have a look at the stats.<sup>51</sup>*

Following New Zealand sporting teams linked New Zealand migrants together and reconnected them with their homeland. The All Blacks are one of New Zealand's most successful and recognisable cultural exports; by supporting the team Kiwis affirmed their national pride to wider Australian society and fellow Kiwi migrants.

### ***'I always miss home'***

Some New Zealand migrants' longing for New Zealand never dissipated. Indeed, some migrants assuaged their longing by returning to live in New Zealand. Grant Curtin moved to America for several years and then spent over a decade in Australia. But he knew he always wanted to come back to New Zealand: *'It was just a feeling that it is home. It's part of your culture. Yeah it's just the lifestyle here. Just the connection to the natural environment ... It's just growing up in a place and having those cultural connections'*.<sup>52</sup> Grant and his family returned to Christchurch in 1986 and he still lives in Canterbury. For many Kiwis, moving back to New Zealand was a natural return to their homeland; to the places, culture, and people they loved. Some Kiwis in Australia longed for New Zealand but could not return to New Zealand due to family and work commitments in Australia. Matthew O'Brien reflected on his conflicting feelings about home:

*Perth's sort of home because the kids are here now ... But I still think New Zealand is my home. I'd like to go back to retire in New Zealand. Just because I love New Zealand. Every time I go back I get that feel of it [as] home. You just get that feeling with the food, people, places. Just feels like home I guess. But at the moment here's sort of home because you got*

<sup>51</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

<sup>52</sup> Curtin, interview.

*your house here, your wife, your kids ... But every time you go back you think "Yeah this is where your home should be".*<sup>53</sup>

Matthew is not unhappy in Australia. There are elements of the lifestyle, such as the Fremantle beaches, which he loves. His family's happiness is of utmost importance. And yet, for Matthew, New Zealand remains his central reference point and homeland.

The perception of New Zealand as home was most powerful amongst Māori narrators. Their connections to ancestral land, whanau, and culture often persisted after many years in Australia. Paul Hamer found that many Māori would return to New Zealand if they could earn the same wages as in Australia. Hamer's Māori participants often made extended visits to New Zealand to reclaim their culture, Māori landholdings, and whanau relationships. Some intended to return permanently and make a new life financed with Australian earnings.<sup>54</sup> Peter Potaka returned to New Zealand after 12 years in Australia because his ties to New Zealand as home had never weakened. He wanted his children to grow up in New Zealand and know what it meant to be Māori.<sup>55</sup> Other Māori, such as Toni Te Kowhai, remained in Australia but continued to long for New Zealand. Toni visits her hometown of Rotorua regularly to refresh herself and be amongst other Māori. To Toni, New Zealand *'feels like home. It's warm and the food's nice and you belong when you look out and you see all these brown faces'*. Toni reflected, *'I always miss home. There's just a part of me that's not filled up unless I go home and reconnect'*. Toni felt that she lives *'with a leg in each country'* because Australia is her children and grandchild's home. While her duty, work, and family all compel her to stay in Australia, her heart is *'still very much at home'*.<sup>56</sup> This tension between family commitments and national longing is addressed later in this chapter.

## Belonging

At the same time as longing for New Zealand, many New Zealand migrants gradually found a sense of belonging in Australia. This became clear when migrants talked about their changing attitudes to the Australian climate, weather, flora, and fauna.

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<sup>53</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>54</sup> Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 153–4.

<sup>55</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>56</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

## *Landscape and place*

Migrants often initially struggled with the Australian environment. While many migrants loved Australia's sunny days and warm winters, an equal number of migrants (particularly those from WA) disliked Australia's extreme heat and weather conditions. Elizabeth Burton came to Perth in 1967 with her parents and brother. The family hated the summer; at times they travelled out to the airport just to sit in the air-conditioning. Elizabeth would come home from school and put her head in the freezer.<sup>57</sup> Valerie Jenner, also in Perth, never got used to the heat. She wrote, 'Even today I still think my head will burst open when it's hot'.<sup>58</sup> Paul McEvedey recalled working on a mine site in Mount Newman where the summer temperatures could get up to 50 degrees Celsius. Workers had to wear elbow length gloves at all times or else burn their skin on metal equipment. Some Kiwi migrants also struggled with Australia's extreme weather patterns. Charlotte Eames, who moved to Queensland in 1985 found the harshness of the Australian climate 'heart achingly hard':

We experienced a smallish cyclone while in Innisfail, with flooding, roads out, crocodiles in backyards, etc. In Victoria there were bushfires not so far from where I worked on more than one occasion; and drought in both Qld and Vic more often than not. I wasn't directly affected, but people I loved were, and it hurt to see.<sup>59</sup>

Sometimes, migrants returned to New Zealand in order to escape the Australian environment. Trina Campano's traumatic experiences in the Sydney bushfires helped instigate her family's return to Auckland.<sup>60</sup> Benjamin Pittman partly left Australia because of his worries about Australia's ecological problems, draughts, and water restrictions.<sup>61</sup>

But many New Zealanders grew to appreciate Australia's different weather and landscapes. Kiwis delighted in being able to plan barbeques or wear summer clothes without worrying about a weather change. Jim Ward moved with his family to Port Hedland in Western Australia in 1973. They initially found the climate very different to New Zealand but learnt to celebrate the extreme weather patterns:

The winter months from April through August were dry with endless cloudless skies but once the weather began to warm up in September we had our first taste of day after day over 100°F. As Christmas approached the 'wet' would arrive; local thunderstorms that would crash and roll

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<sup>57</sup> Burton, written narrative.

<sup>58</sup> Jenner, written narrative.

<sup>59</sup> Charlotte Eames, written narrative sent to author, 1 March 2010.

<sup>60</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>61</sup> Pittman, interview.

in around 4.00 pm. The rain was so heavy. When we experienced our first downpour some six months after arriving we ran out and danced in the rain. It was delightful if not a little crazy.<sup>62</sup>

There could be a sense of excitement at the power of Australia's weather although an element of potential danger remained. Alexander Clifton said he loved '*Brisbane's thunder storms except when they smash up my suburb*'.<sup>63</sup>

As New Zealanders spent more time exploring Australia they came to understand the magnitude of the land they had moved to. Australia's landscape, in the most part vastly different from New Zealand, impressed many Kiwi migrants. They used words such as 'vast', 'harsh', 'enormous' 'raw', 'flat', 'huge', 'beautiful', 'desolate', 'wide open', 'unchanging', 'stark', 'dry', 'brown', 'sculptural', 'coarse', 'red', and 'burnt' to describe the land. A typical comment is from David Cavanagh: '*Everything's burnt brown you know. It's unkempt. Yeah, it's just strange. It's different than here [New Zealand]. I don't know, it's very hard to say it; coarse is probably a word for it. It's a very coarse feeling about the place. It's raw.*'<sup>64</sup> Many Kiwis wrote about driving for days on end on straight roads through unchanging scenery. There was also a healthy respect for the harsh and unforgiving nature of the land. Trina Campano reflected:

*We were there during the drought. You know it was just the harshness of it. It's just unforgiving. And we'd been out in the desert – we took the kids out on a holiday in the desert. It really makes you understand it's such a big orange bit of dirt that is truly unforgiving ... It always used to amaze me that people could kill somebody and the body would still be found because I'd think "This is just such a vast place. You must be able to get rid of bodies easily because it was so vast". Flying over it from say Sydney to Perth, when you're five hours looking at red dirt underneath, it's a big land.*<sup>65</sup>

This growing respect for Australia as a land was part of many migrants' journey in settling into Australia.

Many Kiwi migrants grew to appreciate the Australian landscape. Mildred Royce said '*For ages I thought it could never be as pretty as the New Zealand landscape. It just wasn't green enough for one. But as I got used to it, I was surprised how much I liked it*'.<sup>66</sup> John McNeill

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<sup>62</sup> Ward, written narrative.

<sup>63</sup> Alexander's house, along with many others in his suburb, was severely damaged in a storm in 2008. Clifton, interview.

<sup>64</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>65</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Royce, interview.

found that his attitude shifted from amazement at the sameness of the landscape to an appreciation of its nuances:

*You've just got these hundreds of miles of absolutely flat, hardly a tree to be seen, and there's these giant wheat paddocks [that] just go right out to the horizons. It's just, you know, never seen anything like this before. At first you think, 'Oh it's so monotonous.' But after a while you start to see the subtleties of the landscape – and they are subtle. But you start to appreciate them.*<sup>67</sup>

Kiwi migrants felt a connection to Australian landscape once they were able to attach meaning and memory to specific locations. Elizabeth O'Connor was fond of places in Australia where she and her family had spent special holidays.<sup>68</sup> As New Zealanders learnt more about Australia's history they connected human stories to its vast vistas. Frank Pawson marvelled at the way Australia's early pioneers '*tackled those miles and miles of nothing*' as he flew over Australia in his aeroplane.<sup>69</sup> Alexander Clifton grew to appreciate the Australian countryside through his study of Australian history and camping trips with Australian friends:

*There's a wonderful Paul Keating quote about – something along the lines of "the people I know, the places I love and the resonances I feel". And partly because some of my friends at Xavier [College] loved to go camping and got me out in the Australian bush, it didn't take me a hell of a long time before you start to feel that. And I think also because I was studying it too. I was learning about this place, its history.*<sup>70</sup>

As migrants associated human stories with the Australian landscape – both from history and their own experiences – they felt more at home in their new land.



**Figure 35. Alexander Clifton in his office, surrounded by Australian history books, 2010. Photo by author.**

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<sup>67</sup> McNeill, interview.

<sup>68</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>69</sup> Pawson, interview.

<sup>70</sup> Clifton, interview.

Migrants who grew to love their new surroundings often became quite lyrical when reflecting on their experiences in Australian landscape. Some oral historians transcribe narrators' words in verse form. These oral historians argue that this method mimics the poetic qualities of speech and is a more accurate representation of the spoken word.<sup>71</sup> Frank Pawson's lyrical memories on the view of Australia from his aeroplane lend themselves easily to this form:

*You can look outside  
And you can see the earth is round  
Horizon  
All the way round  
You have a look down below you  
And you can't see anything that's different  
There's absolutely  
No valley  
No hill  
No nothing  
It's just all the same and people live in that  
And people cross that  
It's incredible  
Yeah, it's a land of opportunity.  
It's a land where you've gotta be very very careful  
And yet people live in that  
That's where they do live.<sup>72</sup>*

Jennifer Cooper's narration of her time driving through the outback and desert in Western Australia is lyrical and descriptive, even in prose form:

*On this trip you could drive from horizon to horizon with this arching sky over you. There is no scenery, it's exactly the same. And it's just magnificent in its own way. Space is something that New Zealand hasn't got and space presses on your soul and hooks you in. You stop saying "Oh another bloody gum tree". You just say "This is amazing" ... It was just fantastic. No fences,*

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<sup>71</sup> For an example of this see Elizabeth Craig, "Courage under Fire: Remembering the 1994 Bushfires in Southern Sydney," *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 29 (2007).

<sup>72</sup> Pawson, interview.



*unlimited space, and scruffy growth and bush and red dirt and spinifex and birds, just spectacular. There's something about being out there that grabs you. New Zealand's lovely and we love going back but we're hooked now.*<sup>73</sup>

Indeed Jennifer provided a striking example of a migrant who explored and grew to love the Australian landscape. The below photos depict her encounters with Australian landscapes and wildlife. Generally, migrants who loved the Australian landscape and talked about it most emotively also felt strongly that they belonged to their new country.



**Figure 36. Jennifer Cooper looks at Aboriginal paintings in the Katherine Gorge, c. 1969. Courtesy of Jennifer Cooper.**

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<sup>73</sup> Cooper, interview.



**Figure 37. Jennifer Cooper and her son, Sam, on their first camping trip at Green Patch, Jervis Bay National Park (now Booderee National Park) in 1983. Courtesy of Jennifer Cooper.**



**Figure 38. Sam, Bob, and Patrick Cooper at Uluru, 1986. The photograph was taken during a four day drive from Canberra to Alice Springs. Courtesy of Jennifer Cooper.**



**Figure 39. Bob and Jennifer Cooper, 2009. This photo was taken at Booderie (Jervis Bay) National Park during a family camping trip to celebrate 40 years in Australia. Courtesy of Jennifer Cooper.**

New Zealand migrants' attitudes to Australian flora and fauna also moved from noticing differences towards appreciation. Many migrants found dusty Australian eucalypts inferior to New Zealand's lush native bush; they commented on missing the green of New Zealand. But a number of Kiwis grew to love the gum trees. Margaret Sale recalled that an Aussie girl told her to 'take one gum tree and look at it a while'. After taking her friend's advice Margaret was able to see beauty in the different gum species.<sup>74</sup> Rosanna McEvedey at first overlooked Perth's trees due to their subdued grey-green colour. But after a few years she came to appreciate 'the antiseptic smell, narrow colour range of flowers, and the beauty of the jarrah, karri, ghost gums, and banksias'.<sup>75</sup> In some parts of Australia the flora was more spectacular. John McNeill, who spent 18 months in Queensland, loved the native plants: '*The lush tropical growth and the warmth and the smell of frangipani and the bougainvillea, which is absolutely everywhere there. Frangipani is still my favourite perfume*'.<sup>76</sup> Migrants generally viewed Australian wildlife (with the exception of poisonous creatures) positively. Trina Campano said that while a moving snake-like shadow could still make her panic, she had

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<sup>74</sup> Sale, written narrative.

<sup>75</sup> Rosanna McEvedey, written narrative.

<sup>76</sup> McNeill, interview.

very fond memories of seeing a platypus in the wild. Trina enjoyed Australia's unique mammals: '*They look like God just got the gene pool and shook them all up. But I love bizarre. I enjoyed their weird animals*'.<sup>77</sup> Kiwi migrants also talked about Australia's birds affectionately. Compared to New Zealand's drab but melodious birds, Australian birds' screeching calls and bright colours were exotic and exciting. Migrants' appreciation for Australia's different climate, landscape, flora, and fauna reflected their sense of belonging in Australia.

### ***Citizenship: national identification***

Another important marker in the journey to belonging was the decision of whether to take up Australian citizenship. Becoming an Australian citizen, whether for emotional or practical reasons, was a significant event for Kiwi migrants which indicated that their life was now based in Australia. But belonging in Australia was not necessarily the same as identifying as an Australian. For a few New Zealand migrants, citizenship signalled that they felt Australian. For others, the 'operation' (as it is jokingly called) was a more ambivalent decision made for practical reasons. This group admitted that while Australia was home, they remained New Zealanders. Alternately, a considerable number of long-term New Zealand migrants never became Australian citizens as they felt it showed disloyalty towards New Zealand.

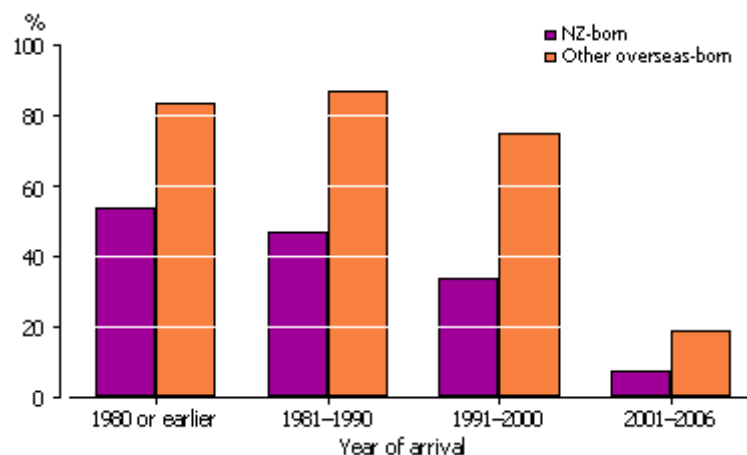
Australian census statistics show that in 2006 only 37 percent of New Zealanders in Australia had taken up citizenship. This was a very low take-up rate compared to the general overseas born population, of whom 71 percent were Australian citizens in 2006.<sup>78</sup> Naturalization rates were even lower amongst Māori; only 22.8 percent had citizenship in 2001.<sup>79</sup> A greater percentage of my narrators had taken up Australian citizenship probably because most of them have lived in Australia for at least 15 years. As the below graph demonstrates, the longer a migrant has lived in Australia, the more likely they were to be an Australian citizen.

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<sup>77</sup> Campano, interview

<sup>78</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, "New Zealanders in Australia."

<sup>79</sup> Department of Immigration and Citizenship, "Population Flows: Immigration Aspects," (January 2007), [www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2005-6/Ch4.pdf](http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/statistics/popflows2005-6/Ch4.pdf) (accessed 12 March 2007)



**Figure 40. Australian born citizenship of overseas-born residents, by year of arrival, 2006. ABS 2006 Census of Population and Housing.<sup>80</sup>**

A few migrants decided to become Australian citizens because they identified as Australians. For example Christine Reis, after much thought, became an Australian citizen in September 1983 because she felt settled. From that day on she ‘proudly travelled on an Australian passport and voted’.<sup>81</sup> Shirley McNicol became a naturalised Australian only after her father died in New Zealand. She felt that now the ‘thread was broken’ she could become an Australian as she had been wanting to do for years.<sup>82</sup> Shane Ashton reflected that over time he was becoming ‘less Kiwi and more Australian’. He took Australian citizenship 10 years ago and now travels on an Australian passport.<sup>83</sup> But the number of migrants who took Australian citizenship because they claimed that they felt Australian was very small.

Most Kiwi migrants who became Australian citizens did so for a mix of emotional and practical reasons but still identified as New Zealanders. One common reason migrants took citizenship was so they could vote in Australian elections. New Zealanders who moved prior to 1984 were automatically able to vote in Australia, but Kiwis who moved after this date could not vote without Australian citizenship. Migrants also became Australian citizens to qualify for scholarships, government jobs, educational funding, and homeowner grants. Others such as Vanessa Farrell were frightened into applying when political rhetoric warned

<sup>80</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, “New Zealanders in Australia.”

<sup>81</sup> Reis, written narrative.

<sup>82</sup> McNicol, written narrative.

<sup>83</sup> Shane Ashton, written narrative sent to author, 27 August 2009.



that migrants would be expelled or denied benefits unless they became citizens.<sup>84</sup> Often there was a mixture of motivating factors. Jonathan Archer became an Australian citizen in the early 2000s after living in Australia for over thirty years:

*I had the operation about eight years ago. Why did I do it? I did it because I felt I'd been here long enough. I'd married an Australian woman. We'd been together for a long time. Things weren't gonna change. I felt some allegiance to Australia. Also there was talk at the time that they were – it had become progressively tougher ... They introduced a thing that you needed a passport to travel but that was not a problem. But then they talked about tightening up on that too, and wanting permanent residency permissions and things like that. So I thought "Well it simplifies everything if you've got citizenship".<sup>85</sup>*

Jonathan's reasons for naturalisation were a combination of his recognition that he had an Australian life, but also a practical response to tightening travel regulations. Migrants who became Australian citizens for practical reasons reassured themselves that as they were able to retain dual citizenship.

In fact, many migrants who became Australian citizens still identified as New Zealanders. Trina Campano took Australian citizenship to 'keep a foot in both camps' but even on the day of the naturalization ceremony did not change her national allegiance:

*It was quite patriotic towards Australia but I didn't feel patriotic towards them. I mean I abide by their laws and I think I did all the right things as a citizen. But I never felt Australian. I felt a part of Australia but I wasn't Australian. Most Kiwis are probably the same.<sup>86</sup>*

Trina's quote reveals that while she felt at home in Australia, and part of the society, this did not change her personal identification as a Kiwi. Hammerton and Thomson in their study on British migrants to Australia found that most of their narrators had a mixed identity, and were uncertain when asked to declare their primary national loyalty.<sup>87</sup> By contrast, most Kiwis had no trouble with the apparent contradiction of belonging in Australia but staying a Kiwi.

A significant number of Kiwis in Australia never became Australian citizens even after many years. Matthew O'Brien stated clearly the reasons he had never become an Australian citizen even after 20 years in Australia:

RB        *What's your citizenship?*

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<sup>84</sup> Farrell, written narrative.

<sup>85</sup> Archer, interview.

<sup>86</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>87</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*, 345.

*MO I'm still New Zealand. I've just never really bothered to do it. I don't see why. You know a few people go, "Oh [you] right sod". But I just couldn't bring myself to become an Aussie. I'll always keep New Zealand ... I've been here 20 years, but if you're an Aussie, you're an Aussie; if you're a Kiwi, you're a Kiwi. Well that's my attitude to it anyway.*<sup>88</sup>

Often Māori migrants found it difficult to 'betray' their New Zealand heritage by becoming Australian citizens.<sup>89</sup> Toni Te Kowhai, who became an Australian citizen for practical reasons, worried about Māori who did not take up citizenship as it deprived them of financial support and advantages.<sup>90</sup> These migrants often could not bear to become Australian citizens as they felt it was incompatible with their New Zealand identity.

### ***A 'national home' and 'family home'***

Although this chapter focuses on cultural symbols arising from interactions – landscapes, food, objects, rituals, and events – it still reinforces the overall finding of the previous chapter that close family relationships usually bond migrants most strongly to Australia. Migrants, such as Matthew O'Brien or Toni Te Kowhai who still longed for New Zealand, stayed in Australia because of their family connections and responsibilities. Time and time again, migrants articulated that family made a home. As Matthew Clements said, home 'is where my family is'.<sup>91</sup> While appreciation of Australian landscapes, weather, animals, and plants were one marker of a sense of belonging for Kiwis in Australia, family attachments were a far stronger factor in making Australia feel like home.

Many migrants also reflected that although they belonged in Australia because of their long residence and kinship connections they still identified as New Zealanders. This dual loyalty was articulated most clearly by Mildred Royce. Mildred, a New Zealand Samoan migrant, distinguished between her family home and national home as the following excerpts reveal:

*It wasn't until then that I realised that home was not really home, and that home had become more than a country. It was beyond my nationality. It was beyond cultural bounds. It was what George [her husband] and I had made. You know that's home. Home is us and our two cats ... Do I still consider New Zealand to be my home? Yes, that's where my love is. That's where my heart is in terms of whatever calls patriotic pride forth ... Home is where my heart really is. I mean it's where I am living right now with my husband. But if I had to say where is my country, it's always going to be New Zealand.*

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<sup>88</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>89</sup> See, Hamer, *Māori in Australia*, 68.

<sup>90</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

<sup>91</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

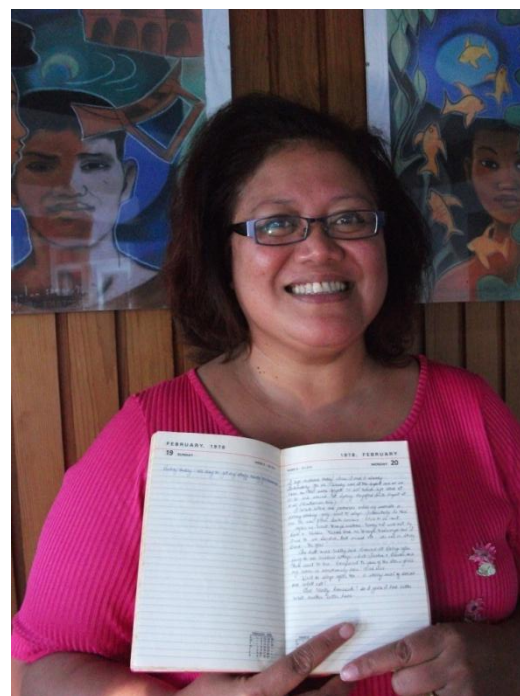
*... I think my view of home has changed. My view of belonging to a home has changed. I mean a physical home in terms of a house and a family. It's here in Wahroonga. But my heart's home, my patriotic home, is New Zealand. Does that make sense?*

*... So I've come to that realisation this late in my life, 50-odd years, realising that belonging for me is many places. But belonging for my heart, my national heart, is in New Zealand ... And sometimes I think, "Why, why, why don't you just become an Australian citizen? You know, you've been here longer than that". I've been here since 1978, it's now 2010. So I've been here ... 31 years, more than half my life. I could get an Australian passport, I could become a naturalised Australian, but I choose not to. I've made that decision not to because I want to be still a Kiwi.<sup>92</sup>*

Kiwi migrants' stories support historian Linda Colley's observation that humans often wear several different identities or loyalties simultaneously.<sup>93</sup> New Zealand migrants in Australia saw no contradiction in calling Australia home but identifying as Kiwis.

## Conclusions

Moving from one country to another complicates and changes migrants' feelings of national belonging and self identification. Rather than reifying New Zealand migrants' national identity this chapter analyses the outward cultural symbols which reveal migrants' changing loyalties to New Zealand and Australia. Although Kiwis are often outwardly indistinguishable as migrants in Australia, most Kiwis found subtle ways in their everyday life to include cultural symbols of their national heritage. New Zealand-themed material culture played a dual role in migrants' lives. In one sense Kiwis purchased New Zealand products, and supported New Zealand sports teams simply because they missed these objects and rituals. Migrants often bought Kiwi junk food out of nostalgia. They displayed New Zealand objects in their homes as a way of reminding them of New Zealand family and



**Figure 41. Mildred Royce, holding her diary open at the day she arrived in Australia in 1978. Note the Pacific images on the wall. Photo by author.**

<sup>92</sup> Royce, interview.

<sup>93</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837*, 2nd ed. (London: Vintage, 1996), 6.



special places. But in another sense migrants used New Zealand cultural symbols to distinguish themselves as different to Australians. For example, Pākehā often had Māori carvings in their homes, not because of any deep connection to the Māori people, but because they were recognisably New Zealand items. Some migrants' support of the All Blacks increased in Australia. Attending rugby games became a strongly nationalistic ritual.

This chapter also reveals that migrants' attitudes towards old and new landscapes reflected their feelings of longing for New Zealand and belonging in Australia. Landscape has historically been a potent national cultural symbol in New Zealand. Migrants' appreciation of New Zealand's mountains, lakes, unspoilt bush, and lush greenery were inextricably linked to their feelings of national identification. Moreover, specific New Zealand places from migrants' life experiences in New Zealand were infused with nostalgic and spiritual resonances. Many migrants longed for familiar landscapes, returning to New Zealand to refresh themselves in their natural habitat. Because New Zealand's and Australia's landscapes and climate are noticeably different, Australia was initially a strange and foreign environment for most migrants. Kiwis' changing attitudes to the Australian climate, landscapes, flora, and fauna indicated their sense that Australia was no longer foreign, but rather a place where they belonged. Indeed, migrants who talked most positively about Australian landscapes identified most strongly as Australians.

Most Kiwis in Australia did come to feel that they belonged in Australia. Over time Kiwis familiarised themselves with Australian society and endowed Australian places with meaningful memories. Most importantly, as the previous chapter demonstrated, Kiwis linked into Australian groups, friendship circles, and family networks. Even for migrants who still longed for New Zealand, close ties to Australian family made Australia home. In spite of its focus on landscape and material culture, ultimately this chapter reemphasises the importance of family networks in creating a sense of belonging.

Migrants' feelings about belonging and national self identification varied significantly, as demonstrated in their reflections on taking Australian citizenship. For some migrants national belonging and identification coalesced. A few narrators identified completely as naturalized Australians. Others refused to become Australian citizens out of loyalty to their New Zealand heritage or returned to New Zealand. But the majority of long-term migrants played it both ways; while Australia was their family home they still identified as New Zealanders. For

these New Zealand migrants, taking Australian citizenship was not a result of feeling Australian but rather a practical response to living in Australia. Most New Zealanders juggled dual loyalties to New Zealand, their 'national home', and Australia, their 'family home.'

## Chapter Eight: Keeping in Touch with New Zealand

Finding meaningful relationships in Australia could not fulfil all of New Zealand migrants' emotional needs. Almost all Kiwis left loved ones behind in New Zealand. Migrants missed the support of their New Zealand family and friends during the first few years after migration. Women in particular missed their loved ones during times of stress and family crisis. To meet these emotional needs, Kiwi migrants stayed connected with family and friends across the Tasman. Most migrants used letters, phone calls, and the internet to stay connected to New Zealand kin. They also visited New Zealand and received visits from New Zealand in return.

This chapter draws inspiration from the literature on transnational approaches to migration. Anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Blanc-Szanton, and Linda Basch first identified transnational practices amongst migrants in 1994. They defined transnationalism as 'the process by which transmigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic, and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields that cross national borders'.<sup>1</sup> However, the popularity of transnational approaches amongst migration theorists has caused confusion. Steven Vertovec argues that academics' excited adaption of transnational ideas to explain widely varied phenomena (communities, capital flows, corporations, politics, services, families, social networks, identities, and public spaces) has led to 'conceptual muddling'.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore Alejandro Portes states that transnationalists often exaggerate the scope of migrants' connections. Studies show that few migrants regularly participate in economic or political transnational activities.<sup>3</sup> Peggy Levitt and Nancy Foner also point out that living transnationally is not new. While recent technology has sped up communication, migrants have always fostered links between their homeland and new destination.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, scholars' claims that transnationalism is a new phenomenon are exaggerated. In spite of these potential pitfalls, transnationalism is an important concept which allows historians to highlight connections that span nations and timeframes. When

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<sup>1</sup> Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Post-Colonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism," 448.

<sup>3</sup> Alejandro Portes, "The Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism," *Global Networks* 1, no. 3 (2001): 182.

<sup>4</sup> Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 21, 23; Nancy Foner, "What's New About Transnationalism?," *Diaspora: A journal of transnational studies* 6, no. 3 (1997).

used intelligently, as Angela McCarthy does in her comparative study of Irish and Scottish migrants, transnationalism provides new insights into migrants' experiences.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter focuses on Kiwi migrants' primary transnational behaviour: sustaining informal social relationships between New Zealand and Australia. In one sense Kiwis in Australia are not particularly transnational. Their continued involvement in New Zealand political and economic systems is scarce. Recent New Zealand governments' attempts to utilise expatriate New Zealand networks and encourage overseas Kiwis to vote in New Zealand elections have met with limited success.<sup>6</sup> As Chapter Six reveals, compared to other migrants in Australia Kiwis demonstrate low levels of groupness and rarely join New Zealand cultural, religious, or political organizations. By contrast, when it comes to informal social contacts, Kiwi migrants in Australia are extremely transnational. Many keep in frequent touch with New Zealand kin and visit New Zealand regularly. While this is not a new trend – Kiwis in Australia have long remained in touch with New Zealand – contact has increased since the 1970s with the advent of globalisation, more accessible transportation, and improved communication methods.

While Chapter Six dealt with migrants' networks within Australia, this chapter analyses the connections between Kiwi migrants in Australia and their kin in New Zealand. I consider the frequency, mode, significance, and changing patterns of trans-Tasman interactions. Kiwis in Australia maintained transnational relationships by letter, phone, internet, and visits because these connections provided emotional sustenance. As Louise Ryan points out, transnational relationships cannot provide all types of support for migrants.<sup>7</sup> But while family in New Zealand were often helpless to provide practical aid, they were a key source of encouragement, advice, and love for migrants. The importance of emotions in migration should not be underplayed. Elaine Ho argues that while the study of emotions in the migration process has been neglected in the past, the recent increase in studying transnational lives has led to a growing interest in migrants' feelings.<sup>8</sup> Some academics have questioned the sustainability of transnational networks, arguing that networks disintegrate as migrants

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<sup>5</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*.

<sup>6</sup> Gamlen, "Creating and Destroying Diaspora Strategies."

<sup>7</sup> Elaine Ho, "Citizenship, Migration and Transnationalism: A Review and Critical Interventions," *Geography Compass* 2(2008).

<sup>8</sup> For example, the *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 29, no. 3 (2008) was devoted to studying emotions in migrants' lives.

age.<sup>9</sup> Kiwis' trans-Tasman relationships were significant because their emotional resonance usually did not fade. But while most migrants' trans-Tasman ties endured, often the nature of migrants' connections with New Zealand altered in response to changing life circumstances. Moreover, in spite of Australia's and New Zealand's relative proximity, transnational family relationships were not always easy. As Gray suggests, transnational families are complex and often difficult to maintain across national boundaries and generations.<sup>10</sup> Kiwi migrants' separation from New Zealand family could be painful, especially in times of illness and emotional stress.

## Why keep in touch?

New Zealanders' main motivation for regular contact with New Zealand was their longing for connection with friends and family left behind in New Zealand. This is a common migrant experience. Hammerton and Thomson found that homesick British migrants in Australia missed family more commonly than British landscapes or culture.<sup>11</sup> Kiwi migrants missed people with whom they had close emotional ties. Glenda Noetzel moved to Melbourne in 1984 with her mother but missed her grandmother: 'It was very hard for me to leave my grandmother as she had been a very significant part of my life. I think I would have to say that for a long time I regretted leaving her'.<sup>12</sup> Maisie McKinley was 'desperately homesick' for her family but was 'too proud and stubborn to go home'. She still misses her brother and sister and their families in New Zealand.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes an ex-partner left behind in New Zealand was the cause of homesickness. John McNeill struggled to get over his ex-girlfriend:

*When I first went from Taumaranui up to Townsville, I got so sort of – I guess it was partly homesickness, but partly also sort of heartsickness as well – I actually wrote back to my girlfriend and offered to pay her fare to come over to Townsville. But she very politely declined (laughs).*<sup>14</sup>

Migrants also missed being part of a large extended family with aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, and nieces. Rosa Tanga especially missed her elder sister who was her 'really good friend' but she also longed for her wider family's social gatherings:

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<sup>9</sup> Alejandro Portes, Luis Guarnizo, and Patricia Landolt, "The Study of Transnationalism: Pitfalls and the Promise of an Emergent Research Field," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 2 (1999).

<sup>10</sup> Breda Gray, "Home a Moving Experience for Irish Women," *m/f* 1, no. 1 (1997): 9.

<sup>11</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms: Australia's Invisible Migrants*, 288.

<sup>12</sup> Noetzel, written narrative.

<sup>13</sup> Maisie McKinley, written narrative sent to author, 12 August 2009.

<sup>14</sup> McNeill, interview.

*It was very lonely, and [I missed] my sister too. By then she'd remarried and she'd had another baby. You know, my other brothers that were living here in Wellington all had babies that were playing together and staying between each other's houses. And just that we've always been one for family dinners, you know, potluck family dinners – even if we can all barely fit in whoever's lounge room ... because the weather's horrible. So you've got people sitting on couches and on the floor and on furniture. We've always been like that, you know, gathered for meals. It's always been a family thing for us. I missed all that. I felt quite lonely in that regard.<sup>15</sup>*

Migrants often lamented the lack of extended family members who could help out, chat on the phone, and look after children. Migrants longed for close caring relationships of long duration which could not be immediately replaced in Australia.

### ***Times for connection***

Kiwi migrants' longing for family was most powerful – and communication most necessary – around celebratory or stressful events. Migrants' separations or divorces were often made harder by the absence of New Zealand family. Marie Reichner divorced her husband after some years in Australia. She found that the 'city was a very lonely place when you don't have any family around and an ex-husband who was very unreliable when it came to caring for the children'. Eventually, Marie along with her new husband and children, returned to New Zealand to be near family.<sup>16</sup> Alexander Clifton, after a messy separation from his wife, was left with the primary care of his baby son. He had never particularly missed his parents but this now changed:

*MC I will say that I missed my family terribly when I went through my terrible crisis. You know I've often lamented that I don't have Mum and Dad living close at a time when I needed them.*

*RB Were you in closer contact during that time?*

*MC Oh absolutely and still are. You know I used to ring them every month or so. I'll ring them every week now. Mum came over for two and a half weeks and then they both came back in January when we had our big family holiday planned. But I'd love them to be more of an influence on Fraser's [his son's] life ... I wish that I could leave Fraser with my parents at times when I have to go to a conference or a research trip. So I don't have the benefits of extended family basically. And I think that's fine if everything else is smooth. But there are times when you need your family.<sup>17</sup>*

Difficult times made migrants aware of what they had given up by moving to Australia. Although Kiwi migrants usually communicated regularly with their family in New Zealand they missed their physical presence and practical aid in times of hardship.

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<sup>15</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Reichner, written narrative.

<sup>17</sup> Clifton, interview.

It was not only crises which made Kiwis homesick; missing out on celebrations and good times could also upset migrants. The first Christmas away from home was sometimes difficult. Joanna Matheson had a busy exciting life studying at NIDA in Sydney but her first Christmas away from home was lonely.<sup>18</sup> Sara Koller usually communicated with her New Zealand family by letters but on Christmas day she would spend hours trying to get a phone line through to her mother.<sup>19</sup> Migrants regretted missing out on weddings, special birthday celebrations, and the births of their siblings' children. Many Kiwis returned home for the most important events but it was still impossible to be there for every special moment. Suzanne Belladonna in Perth would find herself feeling homesick when she realised she was missing out on family events:

*I couldn't always come for someone's twenty-first or engagement. You know, when you've got little children and you're bringing them up, and money as well. So you can't always just pop over. But I've been fortunate enough to be able to come back for some school reunions. That was fun. Yes, so, some things that you can't get home for make you a bit homesick.*<sup>20</sup>

Often migrants missed general extended family interactions on behalf of their children. Gayla Wilson, was not homesick but she missed her family once she had children of her own. She regretted that her children could not have the close extended family relationships she had grown up with:

*I think that's the only thing I would say I would miss or have missed, and I still do. Because I think it's really important for the kids, otherwise the kids don't really know who their cousins are. We were brought up with our cousins whereas my kids aren't really.*<sup>21</sup>

Hearing about family events and experiences back in New Zealand reminded migrants once again what they had left behind by moving to Australia.

### ***Missing mum: gendered migration experiences.***

Some aspects of migration are gendered, and there is growing interest in migration studies as to how women are affected by migration.<sup>22</sup> Much recent work has focused on socially disadvantaged female migrants.<sup>23</sup> But women in more privileged situations also have a

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<sup>18</sup> Matheson, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Koller, written narrative.

<sup>20</sup> Belladonna, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Gayla Wilson, interview.

<sup>22</sup> In addition to below sources see, Eleonore Kofman, "Gendered Global Migrations," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6, no. 4 (2004); World Bank, "The International Migration of Women." (The World Bank, 2007); Ruby Dhar, "Women and International Migration: A Cross-Cultural Analysis," *Diaspora Studies* 3, no. 2 (2010).

<sup>23</sup> For example, see Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Russell Hochschild, eds., *Global Women: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

gendered experience of migration. For Kiwi women in Australia, this was particularly true when they had children. Louise Ryan found that amongst skilled Irish female migrants to Britain transnational networks were unable to provide everyday aid such as childcare but still remained important for emotional support and occasional care.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Mitchell and Green argue that close family bonds, in particular those between mothers and daughters, continue to offer emotional support even when face to face contact is minimal.<sup>25</sup> New Zealand women in Australia had a similar experience after giving birth; they missed having female family members nearby (especially their mother) to provide company and childcare. However migrants' family still gave comforting advice via phone or letter. Jennifer Cooper said she was not a 'homesick sort of person' but when her sons were born she missed having grandparents around:

*It always struck me it was slightly sad that my parents and Bob's parents were missing out on the kids on a day to day basis. Also you have absolutely no support and remember I'm a person who, apart from two years in Canberra, I have worked my entire life. Even although I would use childcare there are times when you could use a mum or a mother-in-law. Help! And also you haven't got them when you have new babies to ask them questions. So there's a whole support group there that is missing. And when I saw my mother I would talk to her about things like that. But you're using letters. You can't get instant results.*<sup>26</sup>

The early stages of motherhood were generally hardest. Julie Podstolski had her first baby soon after arriving in Australia. Consequently she did not know many people except for past colleagues who worked during the day. Staying home by herself to look after her daughter made Julie very homesick and she suffered from postnatal depression.<sup>27</sup> Only once their children were old enough to join a playgroup or school could Kiwi women socialise more easily. Trina Campano felt very isolated after having her first child until she joined an Australian mothers' group.<sup>28</sup> A further complication was that money was often tight during this life stage so visiting New Zealand was often too expensive. During these early stages of parenting New Zealand women in Australia often stayed in closer contact with their mothers in order to combat their loneliness and insecurities.

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<sup>24</sup> Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood," 297.

<sup>25</sup> Wendy Mitchell and Eileen Green, "'I'd Don't Know What I'd Do without Our Mam' Motherhood, Identity and Support Networks'," *The Sociological Review* 50, no. 4 (2002): 4–5.

<sup>26</sup> Cooper, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>28</sup> Campano, interview.



### ***Reciprocal networks: ageing parents in New Zealand***

Kiwi migrants also found it difficult when New Zealand family, especially parents, were unwell. Migration does not end migrants' duty to look after their elders. Women in particular often take on caring roles across national boundaries.<sup>29</sup> Ease of travel and mobility do not lessen the stresses and strains of long-distance caring. In fact proximity often increases women's obligations in caring for elders as it is expected they will visit more regularly.<sup>30</sup> Many of the Kiwis in Australia I talked to were in their 50s or 60s, in a stage of life where their ageing parents increasingly required attention. Matthew Clements reflected that caring for ageing parents was a major issue for him and his peers: *'When that time comes you kind of go, "Oh my God. What the hell are we going to do?" And there's not really a clear answer. All our friends are going through that'*.<sup>31</sup> Angela Tewson and three of her sisters moved to Australia as young women. In recent years, the lack of regular support for their frail elderly parents became difficult. Angela and her sisters coped with the situation by taking turns to visit their parents in New Zealand:

When my father was very frail and failing we took it in turns to stay with Mum and help to nurse Dad. He died peacefully with three of my sisters and my mother there. If we had been closer we would all have been there and it is times like that that you feel the distance and the weight of your decision to live in another country. However, we are lucky too that with six of us (all girls) we can take turns to spend time with Mum.<sup>32</sup>



**Figure 42. Suzanne Belladonna and her father on the beach in Perth, 1989. Courtesy of Suzanne Belladonna**

Female migrants often made regular trips back to New Zealand to care for ailing parents. Some migrants dealt with the problem by bringing their parents over to Australia. Suzanne Belladonna invited her father to come and live with her family in Perth after her mother died. Until he became ill, Suzanne's Dad was very

<sup>29</sup> See Elizabeth Zontini, "Immigrant Women in Barcelona: Coping with the Consequences of Transnational Lives," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30, no. 6 (2004).

<sup>30</sup> Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood," 308.

<sup>31</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Tewson, written narrative.

supportive. He babysat her three daughters, and even helped sew the girls' ballet costumes.<sup>33</sup>

Another occasion for heartbreak and close transnational communication was when Kiwi migrants' friends or family members in New Zealand died. Liz Brodie, who was rarely homesick, recalled the moment when she got the news of her favourite Auntie's death as one of *'those times you probably wished you were closer'*. She felt 'mortified' not being able to do anything about the situation.<sup>34</sup> Being absent for a loved one's death or funeral caused emotions of grief and guilt for many migrants, which they still feel to this day. When I interviewed Trina Campano in Auckland she was unable to tell me about her mother's death which occurred soon after she moved to Australia in 1994 as she still found the memory too upsetting.<sup>35</sup> Lesley Ngatai also found the loss of her mother very emotional:

My Mum died from cancer 2 yrs ago and I went through a period of loss around the notion of home. The first time I flew into Auckland after she died I just cried and cried because it felt Auckland was missing an integral element. It was like the city was wrong and empty.<sup>36</sup>

The death of a parent could spark a feeling of being too far away from New Zealand. For Liz and John Brodie, the death of John's father contributed to their decision to move from Perth back to the eastern states of Australia. When John was unable to fly back to New Zealand in time for the funeral they decided Perth was just too far away from New Zealand.<sup>37</sup> In times of family crisis the Tasman Sea felt wider than usual to migrants; a barrier separating them from their loved ones in need.

But once parents had passed away the bonds tying migrants to New Zealand could change. Migrants' parents were often their closest New Zealand contacts. Parents linked migrants into New Zealand networks, providing updates on wider family news and gossip. Their demise could signal the end of close contact with New Zealand family and friends. Angela Tewson reflected that although she loves New Zealand, once her mother dies she will probably visit New Zealand less frequently.<sup>38</sup> Her mother's death made Sharleen Baker realise that Australia was her home.<sup>39</sup> Occasionally the death of a parent increased contact with New Zealand. Jeanne Cashman spent more time in New Zealand after her mother died because her

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<sup>33</sup> Belladonna, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Brodie, interview.

<sup>35</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>36</sup> Ngatai, written narrative.

<sup>37</sup> Brodie, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Tewson, written narrative.

<sup>39</sup> Baker, written narrative.

difficult relationship with her mother had made visits an unpleasant experience. With her mother gone, Jeanne was free to spend her visits to New Zealand catching up with other family and friends.<sup>40</sup>

## Modes of communication

Most New Zealand migrants dealt with feelings of missing family and friends by making concerted efforts to keep in touch. While a few migrants were relieved to leave unhappy family situations behind, the majority of Kiwis in Australia wrote letters,

made phone calls, and sent emails to their nearest and dearest in New Zealand. Keeping in touch was important to migrants and their New Zealand kin. Regular communication provided comfort, strengthened connections, and up-to-date news on family events.

Before the advent of cheap international phone calls and the internet in the 1990s, most Kiwi migrants in my sample kept in touch with New Zealand via mail. Migrants usually wrote regularly to their parents; more sporadically to siblings or best friends. Migrants often wrote and received letters every one to two weeks. Often the main correspondence was with migrants' mothers who were generally faithful in replying. Sharleen Baker maintained close letter contact with her mother. As phone calls were expensive, Sharleen and her mother made tape recordings and posted these to each other.<sup>41</sup> David Cavanagh wrote postcards to his mother every other day, interspersed with letters and the occasional call from a phone box.<sup>42</sup> Naturally, migrants often corresponded more frequently in the first few years in Australia, when they felt more homesick. Graeme Shirley recalled that just before his first Christmas in Sydney he sent about 30 Christmas cards back to New Zealand. This was a one-off event; after that Christmas Graeme only wrote regularly to his mother.<sup>43</sup> Female migrants were more likely than male migrants to write to a wide number of contacts. Annette Moody kept in touch with friends as well as family. One week she sent 10 letters home to New Zealand.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 43. Jeanne Cashman, 2010.**  
Courtesy of Jeanne Cashman.

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<sup>40</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>41</sup> Baker, written narrative.

<sup>42</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Shirley, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Moody, interview.

The major attraction of letter writing was its ease and economical price. Many migrants recalled that phoning New Zealand from Australia was difficult and expensive. Sarah Koller wrote, 'I think my mother and I wrote letters rather than telephoning. It used to be impossible to get through to NZ by telephone on Christmas Day and sometimes we tried for hours before getting a line through'.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately hardly any of the migrants I talked to possessed copies of their letters. Most were with family members in New Zealand or had been thrown out. This dearth of letters reflects Kiwis' sense of their migration as historically inconsequential.

In spite of the expense, Kiwi migrants also kept in touch with New Zealand via telephone. Some migrants who hated writing letters relied on phone calls. Matthew O'Brien kept in contact with his parents as much as he could but preferred to use the phone: '*I wrote a few letters and stuff but I've never been good at writing letters. It was days before the internet. So it was just a phone call every month*'.<sup>46</sup> Obviously the attraction of telephone contact was its immediacy; it enabled a spontaneous two way conversation. For this reason many migrants preferred the phone when the price permitted. Rosa Tanga used to have long telephone conversations with her sister:

*Every now and then the phone companies do the "ten bucks for as long as you like" international calls. We were on the phone for nine and a half hours one day. This was in the days before cordless phones so the flat I was living in, I'd actually got them to install the phone beside the back door so I could reach my sink, my stove, fridge, and reach outside ... do all those things I need to be doing while I stayed on the phone with my sister. And probably I think once a month we used to basically take it in turns about at ringing each other and we'd talk for two or three or four hours. Telecom made a fortune out of us for a very long time.*<sup>47</sup>

Phone calls were often saved for special occasions. Jennifer Cooper mainly wrote letters to her parents and in-laws but rang them on their birthdays.<sup>48</sup> In the last 15 years calling between New Zealand and Australia has become more affordable. Many migrants now keep in touch primarily via phone.

More recently, Kiwi migrants' transnational networks have been affected by the advent of the internet. Access to internet technologies has given migrants a new way to keep in touch with

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<sup>45</sup> Koller, written narrative.

<sup>46</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>47</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Cooper, interview.

individuals and communities in their homelands.<sup>49</sup> In her study of migrant families in the late 1990s, Raelene Wilding found that those who adopted email technology increased the frequency of their transnational communication.<sup>50</sup> Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Bebo help migrants keep in touch with a wider circle of people on a more casual basis. Lee Komito argues that migrants use social media sites differently than phone calls, emails and texts; they primarily visit sites to monitor friends' activities rather actively communicate.<sup>51</sup> Many New Zealanders now use email, Skype, and social network sites to keep in regular contact with close New Zealand kin but also to stay connected to more distant acquaintances. Tony Harris reflected that the way he communicates has changed due to the internet:

*Whereas you might not contact someone by phone for – oh it depends who it is – for months on end 10 years ago, these days you know what they're doing because of Facebook. And just flicking emails and sharing jokes and that sort of thing, which wasn't available in the early days. So I guess we're more in contact now than when we first came.*<sup>52</sup>

While Glenda Noetzel has little contact with her cousins she occasionally chats on Facebook with them.<sup>53</sup> Some migrants also use websites such as Old Friends to reconnect with former schoolmates. The internet has encouraged some migrants, particularly those who miss loved ones back home, to increase their contact with New Zealand. As most of my participants migrated well before the advent of the internet many are only now rediscovering old connections after years of silence. Their experiences differ from those of more recent Kiwi migrants who use the internet from the first moment of arrival in Australia to stay in touch with New Zealand.

## **The benefits of keeping in touch**

New Zealanders put time and resources into connecting with loved ones in New Zealand because they valued and needed these relationships. They missed seeing their family and friends, and recognised that they in turn were missed. Migrants' closest New Zealand

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<sup>49</sup> See H. H. Hiller and T. M. Franz, "New Ties, Old Ties and Lost Ties: The Use of the Internet in Diaspora," *New Media and Society* 6, no. 6 (2004); D. Diminescu, "The Connected Migrant: An Epistemological Manifesto," *Social Science Manifesto* 47, no. 4 (2008).

<sup>50</sup> Raelene Wilding, "'Virtual Intimacies': Families Communicating across Transnational Contexts," *Global Networks* 6, no. 2 (2006): 131.

<sup>51</sup> Lee Komito, "Social Media and Migration: Virtual Community 2.0," *Journal of the Americal Society for Information Science and Technology* 62, no. 6 (2011): 1082.

<sup>52</sup> Tony Harris, interview.

<sup>53</sup> Noetzel, written narrative.

contacts were people they had known their entire life, who they could count on for understanding, sympathy, and support. Jennifer McLeod who moved to Sydney in 1989 kept in weekly contact with her two best friends in Auckland. Even though she has good Australian friends ‘it’s not the same as people you have known most of your adult life’.<sup>54</sup> When Daphne Park phoned her parents they patiently listened to her debrief about how different Melbourne was, and then filled her in on what was going on at home with family and friends. These conversations made her feel ‘linked in’, ‘rested, and at peace for a while’.<sup>55</sup> Some migrants who neglected communicating with their New Zealand family later regretted their laziness. Peter Potaka reflected he was so busy having adventures in Australia that he did not write to his mother: *‘If I could do something different that’s what it would be, I’d be a better communicator. Because I went away and I didn’t come back for seven years’*. Peter was upset when his father told him years later that when his mother received the only letter he sent her *‘she sat down on the side of the road and read it and cried’*. Now he is a parent with children overseas Peter felt that it was a *‘really really shitty thing I did going all that way and not bothering to write’*.<sup>56</sup> For most Kiwi migrants in Australia and their New Zealand kin regular contact by letter, phone, and internet was a great comfort. This lyrical reflection by Toni TeKowhai is a perfect summary of the value of keeping in touch:

*Even though we walk this earth alone  
 We’re actually walking it all together.  
 And when it’s your family walking with you  
 They’re the ones who give you strength.  
 You know  
 They’re the one[s] who you have a cry to on the phone  
 When the shit is happening.  
 You know  
 Life can be very unfair and disappointing.  
 And it’s your family’s strength  
 That I think pulls you through*

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<sup>54</sup> Jennifer McLeod, written narrative sent to author, 21 September 2010.

<sup>55</sup> Daphne Park, written narrative sent to author, 29 July 2009.

<sup>56</sup> Potaka, interview.

– *Some of the worst of it anyway –*

*And helps to keep you going on.*

*I always look forward to going home.*<sup>57</sup>

## **Going home: visits to and from New Zealand**

For New Zealand migrants, ‘going home’ was the best way to keep relationships alive and counter homesickness. New Zealanders were fortunate that New Zealand and Australia are relatively close. Aeroplane flights became progressively cheaper from the late 1960s onwards. Most Kiwis found jobs quickly and could afford to travel back to New Zealand relatively frequently. Many narrators in this study visited New Zealand on average once every two years. While some came less often, others visited several times a year. The frequency of migrants’ visits depended on their financial and family circumstances.

As expected, reconnecting with family and friends was a major reason migrants returned to New Zealand.<sup>58</sup> Kiwis returned home to be present at sad and joyous occasions, and maintain their relationships with loved ones. When aged grandparents and parents sickened or died migrants nearly always returned to New Zealand. Jennifer McLeod, for example, went back to New Zealand when her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease. She tidied up and sold her mother’s house, sorted out financial and legal issues, and then took her mother back with her to Australia.<sup>59</sup> When Liz Brodie’s parents grew frail she visited New Zealand regularly to help them out:

*When they were getting old and not able to do things for themselves I used to go over every six weeks and clean out their fridge and do all their shopping for them and make sure that they were set up. Even though I had a brother in the same town I felt it gave them a bit of a break and I could work it in around the days I was working. Probably take five days and go over. A big commitment but heck, they did a lot for me. It’s called reciprocation isn’t it.*<sup>60</sup>

Kiwis also often returned home for family celebrations. Weddings, 21st birthdays, Golden Wedding anniversaries and family reunions were all reasons to fly to New Zealand. Rosa Tanga’s siblings clubbed together and bought her a plane ticket to New Zealand as a surprise for their Mother’s 60th birthday party.<sup>61</sup> While some Kiwis were not worried about returning

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<sup>57</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

<sup>58</sup> The other major reason, as described in Chapter Six was to revisit New Zealand places and landscapes to indulge nostalgia, take holidays, or find refreshment.

<sup>59</sup> McLeod, written narrative.

<sup>60</sup> Brodie, interview.

<sup>61</sup> Tanga, interview.



**Figure 44. Jennifer Cooper's three sons in Auckland airport, 1983. Taken on one of the family's regular two-yearly visits to New Zealand. Courtesy of Jennifer Cooper.**

regularly to New Zealand, for others it was a priority.

Elizabeth O'Connor and her family visited New Zealand regularly in spite of the financial cost:

*Once we had the money we came back each year as a family which was a huge expense. But we really committed to that. It meant that we were living in a house in Melbourne that wasn't – it was a three bedroom house and there were seven of us ... We put our money into coming home ... we were very careful to maintain that. That was very important to us. So we kept all those family relationships strong by doing that.*<sup>62</sup>

The importance of family as a motivation for visiting New Zealand is demonstrated in that migrants who had few connections in New Zealand returned more infrequently.

Grace Bell visited Australia often in the early years of migration but now her parents have died and her three siblings live in Australia the ties to New Zealand are 'almost totally cut'.<sup>63</sup>

Another important reason migrants returned to New Zealand was to introduce their children to the land where they grew up.

Many migrants wanted their children to experience New

Zealand culture, connect with their extended family, and visit

places from their parents' past. Gerry Ryall brings his daughters back to New Zealand every year to 'embrace their NZ heritage & family'. They usually come in January to attend the Kumara races.<sup>64</sup>

Kiwis in Australia often make an effort to let New Zealand-based grandparents spend time with their grandchildren regularly. Daphne Park tries to take her two sons back to New Zealand at least once a year so that her parents can 'see the children and experience their milestones'.<sup>65</sup> Some migrants wanted to show their children the places that were important to them. Sue Feary's daughters holidayed in New Zealand when they were small however Sue would like to revisit places from her past with them now they are older:

<sup>62</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>63</sup> Grace Bell, written narrative sent to author, 27 August 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Ryall, written narrative.

<sup>65</sup> Park, interview.



I want to show my children where I lived and grew up and some of the places that helped shape the person I am. Such as the West Coast where I learnt to surf, the University, and where I went tobacco picking in the South Island after I finished working in Rotorua.<sup>66</sup>

Many migrants brought their children back multiple times, hoping to cultivate in them a fondness for New Zealand. Suzanne Belladonna's three daughters have enjoyed a number of trips to New Zealand. Now that Suzanne's daughters have seen Dunedin where she was born, forged good relationships with their cousins, and enjoyed various tourist experiences, they 'love coming over'.<sup>67</sup>

Most migrants' children reacted positively to visiting New Zealand: only a few were less enthusiastic. Regular visits gave most New Zealanders' Australian-born children a sense of connection with New Zealand. Some applied for New Zealand citizenship by descent. Katrina Richmond, who moved to the Gold Coast as a child with her family, returned to New Zealand to have her first child. She had two more children born in Australia and has claimed New Zealand citizenship for both of them.<sup>68</sup> Shane TeAho, the surfer who moved to Noosa for better weather, takes his children back to New Zealand regularly. They now 'always talk about going to live in NZ'.<sup>69</sup> But migrants' children often wanted to experience New Zealand as visitors rather than returning Kiwis. Several migrants recalled that their children grew frustrated at only seeing family and wanted to experience New Zealand's tourist attractions. Jennifer Cooper's sons asked if they could holiday in New Zealand instead of just staying with family:

*Somewhere along the line the kids said – they must have been at high school because they had friends who were going to New Zealand for holidays who were actually seeing all of New Zealand – and they said “Mum can we go and see New Zealand!” So we did a trip back where we walked the Routeburn and they did the Tongariro crossing.<sup>70</sup>*

David Cavanagh started a tradition where he took each of his four children back to New Zealand for a trip once they finished high school. He had intended to send his eldest daughter back to stay with her cousins but instead at her request, they spent part of their holiday at tourist attractions; visiting Larnach's Castle and the Cadbury factory in Dunedin, passing through Queenstown, and going to the Puzzle Park in Wanaka. David is pleased that both his eldest daughters have now made friends with their cousins and visited New Zealand at their

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<sup>66</sup> Feary, written narrative.

<sup>67</sup> Belladonna, interview.

<sup>68</sup> Richmond, written narrative.

<sup>69</sup> TeAho, written narrative.

<sup>70</sup> Cooper, interview.

own initiative.<sup>71</sup> A few migrants' children were less enthused about visiting New Zealand. When Jeanne Cashman took her children on a trip around Wellington to see her old house they were uninterested: '*it didn't mean anything to them*'.<sup>72</sup> And although most migrants' children enjoyed visiting New Zealand family and exploring a new country, they usually did not develop their parents' strong emotional connection with New Zealand.

The traffic across the Tasman was not one sided: Kiwi migrants in Australia received many visits from New Zealand friends and family over the years. The main visitors were migrants' parents. Quite a number holidayed in Australia regularly. The chance to spend time with Australian grandchildren was a strong motivating factor. For example, Ngaire Denne's parents came over in New Zealand's winter every two years to visit her family in Coff's Harbour, staying for two months at a time.<sup>73</sup> Not all migrants' parents could afford such regular visits. Particularly when migrants lived in more remote destinations such as Perth, the cost could be prohibitive. But on important occasions such as getting married or having children, migrants' parents usually tried to be present irrespective of cost. Rosa Tanga did not get many visitors in Ingram, North Queensland, because it was such an expensive journey. However, when both Rosa's children were born her mother made sure to be present.<sup>74</sup> Siblings, grandparents, and friends also visited Kiwis in Australia but much more infrequently. Free accommodation was a lure for some visitors. Marilyn Wilson recalled, 'everyone I had only smiled at in Christchurch came for a free holiday during our first two years in Oz'.<sup>75</sup> Mostly migrants enjoyed their visitors although occasionally they overstayed their welcome. George Clarke reflected that many of his Māori family and friends visited him, expecting to stay indefinitely without paying expenses. George had to tell these visitors that they needed to contribute to their costs.<sup>76</sup> A few migrants also became frustrated that their families expected them to visit New Zealand regularly but made little effort to return the favour. Diana Harlow estimated she returned to New Zealand 15 times but received a visit from her parents only twice: '*It's always "When are you coming?" It's always pressure put on me to go there. But they're not willing to do the same thing you know. And [if] you say "I*

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<sup>71</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Ngaire Denne, written narrative sent to author, 6 January 2010.

<sup>74</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>75</sup> Marilyn Wilson, written narrative.

<sup>76</sup> Clarke, interview.

*can't really afford it" they don't believe you'.<sup>77</sup>* But generally, visits from New Zealand were regular, appreciated, and kept migrants' relationships with their New Zealand kin strong.

## Conclusions

Analysing Kiwi migrants' transnational links between New Zealand and Australia reveals that a major ongoing consequence of moving country is the strain of maintaining relationships across national borders. The majority of Kiwis were 'peoplesick': they missed their friends and family. Especially at times of emotional stress and celebration, Kiwi migrants longed to be together with those they loved. The illness and death of their parents, and the birth of their children were the two most difficult times for Kiwis in Australia. These situations were hardest on women and as such are an example of gendered migration experiences. In these times, distance really mattered and nothing could substitute for being physically close. This is why keeping in touch was such a priority for New Zealanders in Australia. Letters, phone calls, emails, and visits across the Tasman Sea kept bonds of affection strong and provided support in hard times. This finding supports Portes' suggestion that transnational studies focus on non-institutional cross-border practices.<sup>78</sup> Retaining relationships was the number one transnational priority for Kiwis in Australia; far more important than creating economic, political, or nationalist networks between Australia and New Zealand.

Kiwis kept in more regular contact with close kin back home (via communication flows and actual visits) than other migrant groups in Australia originating from more distant shores. Letters and parcels posted across the Tasman took less time to arrive although phone calls were still expensive. In recent years the advent of the internet lessened New Zealand migrants' communication advantage. However, the greatest difference was that New Zealanders made trips to New Zealand and received Kiwi visitors more frequently than other migrant groups. Most English, European, South African, and Asian migrants to Australia would never have dreamed of visiting 'home' every six weeks to clean out their parents' fridge as Liz Brodie did. Those few Kiwis who failed to stay in contact with New Zealand kin blamed their own laziness or desire to leave a negative New Zealand past behind, rather than external limiting factors. Frequent trans-Tasman visits were enabled by the same factors

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<sup>77</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>78</sup> Portes, "The Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism," 183.

which eased migration. Trans-Tasman aeroplane flights became increasingly affordable and regular in the latter 20th century. Most migrants in Australia, as well as their family in New Zealand, reaped the benefit of living in relatively prosperous first world countries and had expendable income to spend on Australian/New Zealand holidays. Travel required little planning due to the Trans Tasman Travel Arrangement. Regular visits fostered close relationships which in turn encouraged enduring communication between Kiwis in Australia and their New Zealand friends and family.

For the second generation of Kiwis in Australia, the connection to New Zealand was much looser. Most migrants made sure to take their children to New Zealand several times. But although migrants' offspring enjoyed exploring New Zealand and meeting extended family, their ties to New Zealand were generally not overly emotional. Due to Kiwi migrants' low levels of cultural distinctiveness and groupness, many second generation Kiwis in Australia do not identify New Zealand as their homeland.

Over time, Kiwi migrants' trans-Tasman networks changed but never died out completely. Homesickness was often strongest in the initial stages of migration, dying away as migrants made Australian friends. But changing family circumstances reframed links between New Zealand and Australia. The birth of children often encouraged renewed homesickness, contact, and visits. Likewise migrants' parents' illness often heightened contact but their death might then loosen migrants' ties to New Zealand. For Kiwis in Australia, the migrant experience of loss and connection is ongoing and evolves throughout their lifetime. The advent of internet communication has added another significant change to the trans-Tasman dynamic. As Komito points out, social networks enable migrants to monitor a far wider range of low-intensity transnational relationships.<sup>79</sup> While close family and friends remain migrants' most important transnational relationships, Kiwis in Australia are increasingly connected to old friends, school mates, work colleagues, and distant family in New Zealand.

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<sup>79</sup> Komito, "Social Media and Migration."

## Chapter Nine: Ongoing Migration Journeys

Migration is an ongoing journey which continues after the initial move. Many New Zealanders who moved to Australia did not settle in one place and remain there. Rather they continued to weigh up their options and change their minds about where to live. New Zealanders usually made further moves (especially return migration) for family and lifestyle reasons instead of financial motives. Onward migration could be a more difficult experience than anticipated, and often Kiwi migrants ended up moving more than once. Some migrants returned to New Zealand. A few shuttled back and forth across the Tasman unable to decide where to settle. Others moved on to international destinations. And many migrants shifted around different Australian destinations. At each move, migrants needed to organize departure, negotiate relationships, and settle into new environments.

As described in Chapter Two, New Zealand migrants to Australia are very mobile. Onwards migration, whether return, internal, or international, was very common amongst my narrators and as such deserves analysis. The below table provides evidence for this claim by noting the migration patterns of my 36 oral history narrators. I did not select interviewees for further migration (although I did specifically talk to 10 return migrants) so the sheer extent of this onward movement was somewhat unexpected. Only six narrators out of my interview group had never moved on from their original Australian destination. And of those six, one (Tony Harris) had already lived in PNG and Fiji. All of the other narrators made at least one more internal or international move.<sup>1</sup> Table 3 highlights that Kiwi migrants' move to Australia was often only the beginning of an ongoing migrant experience.

**Table 3. Onward migration of 36 oral history narrators.**

*denotes residence at time of interview			
<b>Narrator</b>	<b>First Australian city where settled</b>	<b>Further Internal Migration</b>	<b>Other international moves (including to New Zealand)</b>
David Cavanagh	Melbourne	Perth, Adelaide*	None
Jonathan Archer	Adelaide	Melbourne*	None
Frank Pawson	Melbourne*	Jindabyne (in Snowy Mountains)	None
Diana Harlow	Melbourne*	None	Returned to New Zealand (5 years)

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<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, this table does not take into account migrants' extensive short-term travel such as business trips, and holidays in New Zealand, Australia, and other international locations.

Daphne Park	Melbourne*	None	None
Suzanne Belladonna	Gold Coast	Perth*	None
John McNeill	Townsville	Sydney	Returned to New Zealand*
Ann Orre	Sydney	None	England (1 year). Multiple returns to New Zealand*
Jeanne Cashman	Sydney*	None	South Africa (3 years)
Liz Brodie	Warren (outback NSW)	Perth, Kalgoorlie, Tasmania, Sydney	None
Benjamin Pittman	Sydney*	None	Returning to New Zealand/Hawaii
Graeme Shirley	Sydney*	None	Returned to New Zealand (1 year)
Mildred Royce	Brisbane*	None	Returned to New Zealand (7 years)
Toni TeKowhai	Sydney*	None	None
George Clarke	Sydney*	None	None
Gayla Wilson	Sydney	Canberra*	None
Jennifer Cooper	Perth	Adelaide, Canberra*	United Kingdom (1 year)
John Husband	Sydney	Grafton, Finley, Newcastle, Hay, Dubbo (all NSW) Canberra*	Returned to New Zealand (1 year)
Paul McEvedey	Perth	Sydney, Canberra*	Returned to New Zealand several times.
Peter Potaka	Perth	Merrivale (outback NT), Alice Springs, Christmas Island, Darwin	Returned to New Zealand*
Elizabeth O'Connor	Melbourne	None	Returned to New Zealand*
Joanna Matheson	Sydney	Adelaide	United Kingdom (15 years) Returned to New Zealand*
Rosa Tanga	Ingrahm (QLD)	None	Returned to New Zealand*
Christopher Grey	Perth*	None	None
Ceris Nieuwland	Perth	None	None
Matthew Clements and Julie Podstolski	Sydney	Kalgoorlie, Perth*	None
Matthew O'Brien	Kalgoorlie	Perth*	United Kingdom (2 years)
Murray Hunt	Goldsworthy (outback	Shay Gap (outback	None

	WA)	WA), Port Hedland (WA), Perth*	
Bruce Ringer	Gove (outback NT)	Sunshine Coast, Brisbane*	None
Colleen Szabo	Perth	Brisbane*	Returned to New Zealand (2 years)
Tony Harris	Brisbane*	None	Previously lived in Papua New Guinea and Fiji
Alexander Clifton	Melbourne	Newcastle, Brisbane*	None
Annette Moody	Sydney	None	Returned to New Zealand*
Trina Campano	Sydney	None	Returned to New Zealand*
Grant Curtin	Melbourne	None	Previously lived in United States of America Returned to New Zealand*

## Return migration to New Zealand

Migration does not have set starting and finishing points; it is an evolving experience. But return migrants are often ignored in migration histories which focus on the struggles and successes of migrants who stay on.<sup>2</sup> In the historiography of many national migration histories, return movements have yet to be studied.<sup>3</sup> It is only recently that historians have begun to investigate the large numbers of migrants who move back to their homeland.<sup>4</sup> Interest in return migration has partly risen due to transnational approaches which emphasize sustained connections, movement, and interaction. Recent studies favour the concept of mobility over migration. Academics increasingly concentrate on the short-term, short-distance, and circular moves that people make preceding and following long-distance migration.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Alistair Thomson, “‘I Live on My Memories’: British Return Migrants and the Possession of the Past,” *Oral History* 31, no. 2 (2003): 56.

<sup>3</sup> For example, the implications of the significant Irish return migration have yet to be studied in detail. Enda Delaney, Kevin Kenny, and Donald MacRaild, “Symposium: Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora,” *Irish Economic and Social History* 33 (2006): 45.

<sup>4</sup> One of the first studies to examine return migration in detail was Mark Wyman, *Round Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880–1930* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> J. Trent Alexander, “‘They’re Never Here More Than a Year’: Return Migration in the Southern Exodus, 1940–1970,” *Journal of Social History* 38, no. 3 (2005): 653.

New Zealand demographers have studied the return movement of New Zealanders from Australia in some detail. Jacqueline Lidgard conducted two survey-based studies of return migrants from Australia, the United Kingdom, and Europe in 1990 and 2000.<sup>6</sup> Lidgard found that 88 percent of Australian returnees were motivated to return by family ties. Furthermore, Lidgard noted that returning migrants put a high priority on family support and mostly settled in New Zealand close to their families. Many returnees were also influenced by their love for New Zealand's physical environment and lifestyle. By contrast, economic factors were negligible; many migrants forfeited higher overseas incomes overseas on their return. Kiwis returning home were not generally dissatisfied; 84 percent of return migrants from Australia felt positive about their time overseas.<sup>7</sup> Lynda Sanderson's recent research on New Zealand return migration from Australia points out that relatively low travel and resettlement costs enable more complex patterns of circular and repeated migration. Many New Zealanders in Australia, especially highly skilled migrants, make multiple trips to New Zealand which could encourage return migration. Sanderson concludes that migrants' mobility patterns are far more complex than the traditional paradigm of settler migration. Many migrants, even those who intend to move permanently, relocate again in a relatively short period.<sup>8</sup>

As demography research gives little qualitative detail on return migration this chapter investigates return migrants' motives for returning to New Zealand, and experiences on arriving back home. My findings substantiate demographers' claims that return migrants to New Zealand are usually motivated by relationship and lifestyle considerations rather than economic concerns. In addition this chapter reveals that the move home was not always easy. While a few Kiwis slotted back in without difficulty, others found that New Zealand society and relationships had changed. Indeed, many migrants regretted leaving Australia and returned again. Most return migrants retained their connections with Australia, contributing to the networks of relationships that criss-cross the Tasman Sea.

## **Why return?**

Migrants' main reasons for returning to New Zealand centred around relationship and lifestyle aspirations rather than economic motivations. New Zealand rarely offered greater

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<sup>6</sup> The first survey was done in Lidgard's thesis. Jacqueline Lidgard, "Return Migration of New Zealanders: A Rising Tide?" (master's thesis, Waikato University, 1992).

<sup>7</sup> Lidgard and Gilson, "Return Migration of New Zealanders," 101, 117–19.

<sup>8</sup> Sanderson, "International Mobility of New Migrants to Australia," 296, 322–4.



career and financial opportunities than Australia. Some return migrants were escaping unhappy relationships but most were pulled back to New Zealand by their desire to live near extended family or bring up their children in their homeland. Often a number of interacting factors contributed to migrants' decision to leave Australia.

### ***Economic motives***

Throughout the late 1960s to early 1990s Australia's economic climate was stronger than New Zealand's. While some migrants returned to take up specific jobs in New Zealand, generally Australia offered migrants the same or greater career opportunities. Several migrants returned to New Zealand when the exchange rate was in Australia's favour, which meant their money went further. Denzil Morgon received redundancy in 1990 from the New South Wales government and took advantage of the good exchange rate by moving with his wife back to Cambridge.<sup>9</sup> Some migrants who did not succeed financially in Australia figured they might as well return home. David Stewart's family returned to New Zealand because they decided 'that being poor was better in NZ'.<sup>10</sup> A few migrants returned home to take up specific job offers or business opportunities. Neil Henry moved back to New Zealand so he could rejoin the New Zealand army in a deployment to East Timor.<sup>11</sup> In most cases, economic motives were secondary to relationship and lifestyle aspirations.

### ***Relationship motivations***

Joining New Zealand-based family was the major motivating factor for most return migrants. This is a common experience amongst other national groups of return migrants. Thomson found that at least half of return migrants moving from Australia back to Britain were motivated by family reasons.<sup>12</sup> A number of Kiwis returned so their children could spend time with New Zealand grandparents. Camilla Donaldson returned to New Zealand because she was homesick and wanted her parents to be able to enjoy their two granddaughters.<sup>13</sup> Other return migrants missed support from their extended family. Marie Reichner remarried after a failed first marriage to an Australian. When her ex-husband died she realised that she and her New Zealand partner no longer needed to stay in Australia; instead they could return to be with their extended family:

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<sup>9</sup> Denzil Morgon, written narrative sent to author, 25 August 2009.

<sup>10</sup> David Stewart, written narrative sent to author, 8 September 2009.

<sup>11</sup> Henry, written narrative.

<sup>12</sup> Thomson, "'I Live on My Memories'," 59.

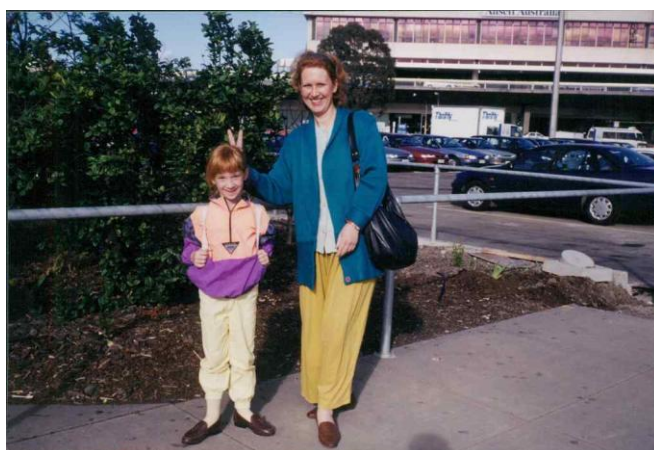
<sup>13</sup> Camilla Donaldson, written narrative sent to author, 15 February 2010.

After having thought about it for such a long time I finally decided that I was ready to go back 'home'. I felt I needed to have my family around me and I wanted my children to experience having family around them – grandparents, cousins, uncles etc.<sup>14</sup>

Likewise, Christopher Ellis retired in Auckland after fourteen years in Cairns because he wanted to spend more time with his extended family: 'Family are all here and growing. I have not only a niece and nephew both married but they too have children. Family is important to me and I missed seeing the little ones growing'.<sup>15</sup>

A few return migrants fled loneliness or relationship break-ups. Jim Ward's dearly loved wife of 32 years, Heather, died in 1995. Jim had trouble settling down in Perth so he returned to New Zealand and remarried. The second marriage failed after only a year and Jim returned to Western Australia.<sup>16</sup> Lauren Lindsay migrated to Sydney in 1989 with her family. In 1998, after a divorce, Lauren decided to return to New Zealand hoping it would be a new start for her and her anorexic daughter.<sup>17</sup> Diana Harlow left Australia after the break-up of her marriage to escape her ex-husband's family's influence on her daughter:

*So when we broke up of course there was a daughter there. Even though they couldn't have cared less if I'd been run over by a truck, they wanted to keep their hooks in her. So they would be constantly dropping round unannounced or ringing and wanting to arrange things and I wasn't allowed to say no. There was a lot of pressure put on me because they wanted to keep in touch with her. Anyway, after a few years of this I'd had enough. It was just getting ridiculous ... I thought "I just wanna get away from this bad situation". It was just horrible. They were just harassing me. They were ringing up all the time and dropping in and I thought "Nah". So I just said to them – I probably shouldn't have – but I said "We're going back to New Zealand". They didn't believe me. They thought I was bluffing."<sup>18</sup>*



**Figure 45. Diana Harlow and her daughter outside Tullamarine airport, 1994, before their return to New Zealand. Courtesy of Diana Harlow**

Diana and her daughter lived in New Zealand for several years before they returned to Melbourne. Sometimes migrants' wider social situation caused their return home. Annette

<sup>14</sup> Reichner, written narrative.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Ellis, written narrative sent to author, 31 August 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Ward, written narrative.

<sup>17</sup> Lindsay, written narrative.

<sup>18</sup> Harlow, interview.

Moody, who had thrown so much of her energy into working in a Sydney amateur theatre company, left Australia after two years when she could no longer cope with the demands of the situation. She was driven away by personality clashes within the pressured atmosphere of theatrical productions.<sup>19</sup> Stressful or disappointing personal situations encouraged some Kiwi migrants to consider starting again elsewhere. New Zealand, with its familiar society and family networks, was the obvious choice.

Another motive for Kiwis to return to New Zealand was supporting close family members in times of hardship. Vicky Sayers moved to the Gold Coast in 1995, but 10 years later her sister was diagnosed with breast cancer. Initially Vicky visited three or four times in several months. Then her sister asked her to come home to be with her during a double mastectomy and chemotherapy.<sup>20</sup> In 2004 Vicky returned to Christchurch permanently to support her sister. Migrants were often pulled back to New Zealand by their parents' illness. Annette Schnack and her husband moved back to New Zealand for several reasons:

Eventually we became very unsettled when my husband had some health issues with heart problems. Because of this I felt very vulnerable. My parents were now very old (91 & 88) and my mother had been put in a rest home. I was really quite tormented by this and the fact that I wouldn't be there to actually see them off and it played on my mind.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Annette later felt that returning to New Zealand was a mistake, she was still glad that she was present for her parents' deaths. Sometimes return was sparked by pleas from New Zealand. Paul McEvedey felt that his wife Rosanna's family pressured her to return to New Zealand as her father aged: *'Her mother rang and said "Your father's dying. Can't you come home? He doesn't deserve to die without one of his daughters"'*.

Accordingly, Rosanna moved back to New Zealand for four years until her father passed away. Paul was unable to transfer his Western Australia law and accounting qualifications to New Zealand so he shuttled backwards and forwards across the Tasman.<sup>22</sup> Migrants' loyalty and ties of affection to New Zealand family were often a strong motive for return migration to New Zealand.

Several migrants were enticed back to New Zealand by romances. Holly Radel returned to New Zealand hoping to meet up with an old flame. When no relationship eventuated after

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<sup>19</sup> Moody, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Vicky Sayers, written narrative sent to author, 16 August 2009.

<sup>21</sup> Schnack, written narrative.

<sup>22</sup> Paul McEvedey, interview.

seven months in New Zealand she happily returned to Australia.<sup>23</sup> David Cavanagh returned to New Zealand ostensibly to recover from a motorbike accident, but he admitted that the possibility of a rekindled romance also played a part:

*DC I sort of decided, well, maybe I'd revisit some of the old girls and see how we were going. And things had moved on.*

*RB So you had actually thought about them while you were away?*

*DC Oh yes, yeah, yeah. I had thought about 'em and thought well maybe I'd let an opportunity slip here. And I had you know. It's probably, I don't know, a moot point I guess, if I'd come back here and had connected back up with a couple, or one or other of them, maybe I would've just stayed.<sup>24</sup>*

David returned to Australia after a few months in New Zealand. Some migrants came back to New Zealand to save existing romantic relationships. Charlotte Eames moved back to Rotorua in 2005 because her English husband wanted to live in New Zealand. Charlotte was reluctant to leave Australia; she had many good friends and loved the sunshine. But in order to 'avoid the shame of a third failed marriage' she acquiesced to her partner's request even though she knew return would be financially disadvantageous.<sup>25</sup> Just as some migrants moved to, or stayed in, Australia to be with their partners, others returned to New Zealand for the same reason.

Some migrants returned to New Zealand for their children's sakes. Many return migrants believed their children would experience a better lifestyle and upbringing in New Zealand than Australia. The perceived benefits were more contact with family, outdoor experiences, Māori culture, and a New Zealand education. Llana Heron returned so that her sons could live near their grandparents.<sup>26</sup> Peter Potaka on a return visit to his home marae realised that 'Māori was on the rise; it was OK to be Māori. Māori were achieving.' With this in mind Peter returned to Alice Springs determined to bring his family home:

*When I looked around I thought "I want my kids to grow up here. I don't want them to be in Australia. I want them to come home and experience what it is to be Māori and have some attachment to where I grew up". So I went back and the boss wasn't very happy. I said "No, not even debating this. This is not up for debate". Spoke to Shona [his wife] and I said "Right, let's go. We're going home".<sup>27</sup>*

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<sup>23</sup> Holly Radel, written narrative sent to author, 16 February 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>25</sup> Eames, written narrative.

<sup>26</sup> Heron, written narrative.

<sup>27</sup> Potaka, interview.

Douglas James returned home partly so that his children could go to an intermediate school.<sup>28</sup> Rosemary Neilson could not afford the fees for private schooling in Sydney and worried that her daughter would be ineligible for a good public school. So in 2001, Rosemary returned so that her daughter could attend secondary school in New Zealand.<sup>29</sup> Trina Campano and her husband Tony partly moved back to Auckland as they felt there were far more varied and affordable recreational opportunities for their children in New Zealand than Australia.<sup>30</sup> While many migrants felt Australia offered better opportunities for their children, others believed New Zealand was a superior place to bring up a family.

### ***Lifestyle aspirations***

Return migrants not only dreamed of better lifestyle opportunities for their children; they also wanted to fulfil their own personal lifestyle aspirations. Some return migrants preferred New Zealand's 'greener', slower paced lifestyle over Australia's water shortages and crowded urban culture. Douglas James came back to New Zealand in 1973 with his wife and children. Even though they had built a house in suburban Sydney, the family struggled with the heat, poisonous spiders, and Douglas's long commute to work.<sup>31</sup> Judith Wise lived in Australia for 30 years, for 20 of those years in Melbourne. She returned to New Zealand to escape Melbourne's unsustainable lifestyle: 'the increasing chaos of driving', the heat, flies, 'severe lack of water, and subsequent water restrictions'.<sup>32</sup> Benjamin



**Figure 46. Grant Curtin outside his property in Whitecliffs, Canterbury, 2010. He and his family moved back to Christchurch in 1986 after about ten years in Sydney because he missed the New Zealand lifestyle, culture, and natural environment. Photo by author.**

<sup>28</sup> Douglas James, written narrative sent to author, 28 August 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Rosemary Neilson, written narrative sent to author, 27 April 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>31</sup> James, written narrative.

<sup>32</sup> Judith Wise, written narrative sent to author, 16 October 2009.

Pittman, who was organising his return to Northland from Sydney when I interviewed him, was also leaving for environmental reasons:

*A lot of people are actually moving back to New Zealand for lifestyle reasons and that's a pretty significant thing. I think as a nation, Australia's got some very very big challenges ahead. Not only in terms of the kind of society that's developing here in all its diversity, but also just in terms of the environment. Australia is the driest continent on earth. They've got horrendous problems coming up with climate change and water resources being extremely poor generally. So I think there are a lot of major things that Australia will have to face up to. I would far sooner be on my farm, back in Northland New Zealand in the green with plenty of water and be very happy.<sup>33</sup>*

As a rule, lifestyle aspirations were secondary to relationship motives. The desire for a New Zealand lifestyle often helped migrants decide to return but was not the primary factor. However, as Benjamin Pittman commented, this may change in years to come as Australia becomes progressively drier, busier, and more heavily populated.

## **A challenging experience: settling back into New Zealand**

### ***Reconnecting with loved ones***

Getting back in touch with family and friends was rewarding for some migrants. Marie Reichner returned to Cambridge after decades in Australia. She felt the return home was the best decision she could have made: 'I now feel really happy and settled and have friends from my childhood who are better friends than any I tried to establish during my 20 years in Australia – I guess I really never felt like I fitted in'.<sup>34</sup> Joanna Matheson and her daughter moved back to New Zealand in 2006 from England (where she had moved to after several years in Australia). She now lives only a few kilometres away from two of her sisters. Her parents lived with her for several years and still live close by. Hooking into her close extended family was one of Jo's main reasons to return to New Zealand. Although she lost some of her autonomy, their presence has been a great support.<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, some return migrants found it frustrating to be back amongst New Zealand family and friends. Even when relationships were still good, migrants became aware of a gap between them and their family. Arthur Scarf enjoyed settling back into life near his family but he realised that 'after seven years away from NZ my expectations of life now differed

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<sup>33</sup> Pittman, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Reichner, written narrative.

<sup>35</sup> Matheson, interview.

from my brothers and sisters'.<sup>36</sup> Diana Harlow felt that her friends and family in New Zealand had changed; they seemed more materialistic and 'obsessed with money'. Although Diana kept in touch with old schoolmates during her 15 years in Australia, once she spent more time with them she found they had little in common anymore.<sup>37</sup> Sometimes return migration was positively upsetting. Delia Patarau moved to Mount Hawthorn, Western Australia, as a seven year old in 1979. She was the eldest of five children and initially struggled to settle in to school in Australia. But when Delia returned to New Zealand in 1990, aged 18, for her grandfather's funeral it was not a happy experience:

I wasn't working so went home with my Mum to the funeral. I ended up staying for two years – this was a very difficult and lonely experience. My grandmother, who was a grieving widow, was really challenged by having me in her home and picked on me a lot. (She hated my accent – it meant working hard to undo that which I had worked hard to do!!!) I had also expected that I would instantly have friends in my cousins. This was not the case straight away – a lot of my cousins were away or were really busy with their own lives. My uncles close to my age treated me like an annoying little sister (which makes sense but it was hard to take).<sup>38</sup>

Delia did eventually become closer with some of her cousins and enjoyed taking Māori courses at the local marae but her experience in New Zealand was tainted by the initial difficulty of fitting in.

## **Children**

Bringing children back to New Zealand often concerned migrants, especially if their offspring were old enough to oppose the move. Ann Orre's two sons did not want to come when the family returned to New Zealand in 1986. In later years, Ann's eldest son told her, *'That was the worst thing you ever did to me, was take me out of school at 14 and bring me over back to Christchurch'*. But Ann's younger son loved the Canterbury lifestyle and became a keen snowboarder.<sup>39</sup> Often difficulties settling into New Zealand were short-lived. Peter Potaka's daughter Kylie soon overcame initial opposition at her new school:

*Kylie, she was just 10. She had a struggle because we went to Waiora ... that was a hard place for them to come into. You had a little girl who looked Māori – because she's quite dark – who spoke like an Aussie. I guess the saving grace was that within a week they worked out that this little girl who was Māori, who had a Māori name, who spoke like an Aussie, was cleverer than anyone else in the school. So they sort of took her under their wing.*<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Arthur Scarf, written narrative sent to author, 7 September 2009.

<sup>37</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Delia Patarau, written narrative sent to author, 9 September 2009.

<sup>39</sup> Orre, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Potaka, interview.

Parents were often very concerned about the effect of return migration on their children's wellbeing. Trina and Tony Campano deliberated for three years before return, moving just prior to their eldest son starting high school. Trina chose Auckland as their destination as she felt it was the best place for her two children:

*We chose Auckland because it was like a mini Sydney, so that the kids wouldn't feel that they're living in Winton or something in Southland where they haven't got a Westfield. It would actually be quite cruel to the kids to take them to somewhere just because you thought it was a good idea. You were taking them away from the only thing that they knew.*<sup>41</sup>

She also researched Auckland schools' decile ratings over the internet to decide where to buy a house. Even after their return migration to New Zealand a few migrants still worried about whether the move affected their children adversely. Rosa Tanga's daughter outwardly adjusted well to life in Wellington but her mother was still uncertain about how fully she has settled: *'She did transition quite well but I still get concerned sometimes that it's a little bit on the surface. Like I said with the way she flicks with the accents, I wonder if she feels she belongs'*.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Changes on return***

On returning, some migrants felt that New Zealand was exactly the same whereas others believed New Zealand had changed in their absence. Elizabeth O'Connor felt that New Zealand had not changed and that it was very 'confirming' of her identity to be back in her own country.<sup>43</sup> Those migrants who did perceive changes in New Zealand usually did so negatively. For example, Annette Schnack wrote, 'we found there were many aspects of life in NZ that had altered quite drastically and not (in our opinion) for the better'. Annette admitted that over 20 years everywhere changes, but felt that because it was her 'homeland' there was 'a certain kind of tragic element to the change in New Zealand'.<sup>44</sup> A number of migrants commented on the increased presence of Māori culture in New Zealand society. Mildred Royce, who came back to New Zealand after 11 years in Australia, noticed that New Zealand had been 'Māori-fied': *'So much had changed. I remember walking through Auckland airport and thinking "Wow, look at all these Māori signs, wow"'*.<sup>45</sup> Diana Harlow felt that political correctness had gone 'crazy' in New Zealand after she was called racist at

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<sup>41</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>43</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Schnack, written narrative.

<sup>45</sup> Mildred Royce, written narrative sent to author, 23 October 2009; Royce, interview.



work for describing a client as Māori.<sup>46</sup> Often return migrants realised they had changed in Australia and needed to readjust. Holly Radel and her husband identified this issue: ‘We discussed after 3 days at work in NZ that we were going to have to moderate our way of communicating. By being less direct, damping down our language, and slowing down a little’.<sup>47</sup>

### ***Economic disappointment***

Some return migrants were also disappointed by economic conditions in New Zealand. Many migrants, especially those who came back to pre-arranged jobs, settled into a comfortable existence. While not better off than in Australia, they earned more than enough to pay their bills. But migrants in lower paying jobs or with only one income were shocked by New Zealand’s lower wages. Beth Hall and her husband moved back to Akaroa in 1998 and found ‘wages to be very low – going rate was \$10 per hour. Grocery costs were high’. The Hall’s financial situation improved when they moved to Gisborne and purchased two houses during a property boom.<sup>48</sup> Diana Harlow also found herself in financial difficulties back in New Zealand:

*I realized I’d made a terrible, terrible mistake. You must think I’m terribly mercenary, but it was financial. The wages were so low and prices everywhere were so high. It was just really hard to make ends meet. I thought “How do people live on these wages?” I couldn’t believe it; it was like half of what I was getting in Australia.<sup>49</sup>*

Most return migrants persevered or changed career if they had trouble finding a job in New Zealand. Peter Potaka found himself in a ‘catch-22’ situation when he realised he could apply for a Principal’s job in New Zealand as he had been one in Australia, but would not receive the job until he had first worked as a senior teacher in New Zealand. Accordingly, Peter moved away from teaching into social welfare, policy work, and management of the New Zealand Māori Rugby union team.<sup>50</sup> Rosa Tanga overcame initial difficulties in finding a job to start a successful career in government social policy.<sup>51</sup> But even when migrants made a good living their knowledge of much higher equivalent wages in Australia could turn their minds towards crossing the Tasman Sea once again.

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<sup>46</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>47</sup> Radel, written narrative.

<sup>48</sup> Hall, written narrative.

<sup>49</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>50</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>51</sup> Tanga, interview.

### ***Continued trans-Tasman connections***

Most return migrants in New Zealand kept in touch with Australia. Email, Skype, and capped phone contracts were common ways of contacting Australian friends and family regularly. Migrants also visited and holidayed in Australia. Peter Potaka and his wife often meet up with their friends at the Melbourne Cup. Peter explained, '*We get together and you waste the first night reminiscing. But you know, that's part of keeping the relationship alive and reminding yourselves of the great times we had*'.<sup>52</sup> Migrants with children who are partly Australian often returned so their children could reconnect with school friends and family. Migrants sometimes enjoyed revisiting favourite Australian landscapes. Marcus Hack visits Australia often to see his friends and family, but also to do further outback trips.<sup>53</sup> Migrants' regular connections with Australia also kept alive the possibility of returning to Australia. Diana Harlow remembered having the internet installed in her New Zealand home in 1999. As well as keeping in touch with her Australian friends, she was now able to check house prices and job vacancies in Australia, which furthered her plans to return to Melbourne.<sup>54</sup> The relative ease of keeping in touch and visiting Australia often enabled migrants' to return to Australia.

### **To and fro across the Tasman**

The above analysis reveals that migrants' return to New Zealand was often unsettling. One might expect that return migrants' knowledge of New Zealand society and continued contact with family and friends would prepare them for life back home. In reality, many return migrants found it surprisingly difficult to settle back into New Zealand. While about half of my narrators remained happily in New Zealand, the remainder regretted returning to New Zealand and moved back to Australia. Out of my sample of 275 survey respondents, 98 said that they had returned to live in New Zealand at some stage. Some of those who returned stayed for a few months. The majority returned to New Zealand for at least several years. Of the 98 who returned, 52 returned to Australia, and 46 were still living in New Zealand at the time of the survey. A number of return migrants in New Zealand also wanted to move back to Australia in the future.

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<sup>52</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>53</sup> Marcus Hack, written narrative sent to author, 25 October 2009.

<sup>54</sup> Harlow, interview.

Furthermore, some migrants moved to and from Australia several times. Maxwell Harris and his wife live a trans-Tasman life shuttling ‘back and forth as and when merchant-banking business and family in both countries require’.<sup>55</sup> Sara Koller dropped out of university to move to Sydney in 1980. She returned to New Zealand in 1981, feeling homesick, but then moved back to Melbourne in 1983 with her Australian boyfriend (who she had met in New Zealand). She and her partner married in Australia and had a child in 1987. Soon after, the couple returned to New Zealand to live near Sara’s parents. But after some years Sara’s husband initiated a move back to Australia. The Kollers returned to Melbourne in 1998 and still live there today. Sara eventually accepted her trans-Tasman movements:

I do wish I had understood more about trans-Tasman relationships when I was beginning one – it’s such an unresolvable issue about where to belong and where to live. Even where to be buried or where we’d like our ashes spread. About three years ago I realized that I’d reached a point where I love both countries just as much. It’s a relief to think that I’m not always trying to decide where to be – just be where I am.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Ann Orre: ‘flitting backwards and forwards’***

Migrants’ motives for moving to and from Australia changed over time according to their lifestyle aspirations, finances, and family situations. Moreover, migrants often had multiple reasons for moving at any one time. Ann Orre’s story illustrates the complexity of the decision-making involved in moving to and from Australia.<sup>57</sup> Ann originally moved to Australia when she was 21 in about 1963. She had just finished her nursing training and was tired and stressed out after her final exams. At the same time some of her girlfriends already in Sydney rang her and asked if she would come make a fourth in their flat. She went to her Nursing Matron and asked for leave. The Matron’s unsympathetic response was a sliding door moment: ‘*She just told me off and looked at me with her fierce eyes and I got all bolshy and I left and I went to Sydney*’. In her first year in Sydney she became engaged to Robin, a ‘ten pound Pom’ migrant to Australia. Robin and his brother found work mining at Mt Isa in outback Queensland. Meanwhile, Ann returned to live with her parents in New Zealand while she prepared for the wedding. Robin and Ann lived in New Zealand after they married. But Robin disliked New Zealand so after a year they migrated to England. The couple spent a year in England but Ann was badly homesick so they then returned to New Zealand. After a few months in Timaru, the couple moved up to Auckland. During their nine years in

<sup>55</sup> Maxwell Harris, written narrative sent to author, 6 October 2009.

<sup>56</sup> Koller, written narrative.

<sup>57</sup> All following information taken from Ann Orre, written narrative sent to author, 9 September 2009; Orre, interview.

Auckland they had two sons and bought a house. However, Robin was never happy in New Zealand, which he described as a 'rotten little country'.

After talking about returning to Australia for several years, one day Robin announced they were moving to Perth. Ann was not happy. She loved their Auckland home and her circle of good friends. Just as they were about to buy the tickets she put her foot down: '*I suddenly said "I'm not going all the way to Perth, it's too far away"*'. So the family moved to Sydney instead. In spite of her reservations, Ann enjoyed Sydney's climate and lifestyle.

Unfortunately her marriage crumbled and the couple separated. Ann found a job at an advertising agency in Sydney and there met her new partner, Bert, a migrant from the Netherlands. Bert and Ann moved in together but their relationship was initially volatile. Ann's two sons were living with her ex-husband and Bert's four children with his ex-wife. Both of them were plagued by guilt and fought constantly. In 1986, Bert and Ann decided that they should try moving back to New Zealand:

*The reason we came back here was mostly because I really wasn't seeing much of my parents and brother and everyone. They all lived here and I said, "Oh it would be nice to have family". He just said, "Why don't we go over and live in Christchurch, then we can see your family and I can get away from her." So that was the reason why we came back. Not for any economic reason, because he didn't have a job to come back to.*<sup>58</sup>

By this stage Ann's two sons were living with her again. Neither of them wanted to return to New Zealand and she had to bribe them with the promise of a new motorbike.

Back in New Zealand the couple struggled. Finances were a big problem. Although Ann found work quickly Bert, who worked in insurance, moved from job to job. Ann and the boys found the Christchurch winter freezing. But after a few years life settled down. The family enjoyed taking short trips out to Kaikoura, the West Coast, and Akaroa. In 1989, calamity struck; Bert received a phone call from Australia saying that his ex-wife was dying of cancer. Ann agreed that she and Bert would take on his three daughters, so Bert flew to Australia and returned with the girls after their mother's death. A week later Bert lost his job. Ann described the ensuing stress:

*So they came back, that was five children in the house. I was working full time. The first week they came his company said, "Oh we're folding up sorry, you're out of a job". So here he is, head in hands, he's in a terrible state. Really, he was much worse than me. I said, "Oh come on, we'll get through". He did get a job but it wasn't for about a month later, so we had to go*

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<sup>58</sup> Orre, interview.

*into the bank and say, "Could we just make a stop on the mortgage payments?" And they were good. They said, "Yeah, you can have three months off that". Bert was saying, "I don't know what to do. I haven't got a job and we've got all these kids". He was pretty upset, pretty crabby with them all. And they were all crying because their mother had died and they'd come over with – didn't have much when they came. We had to find the money to buy them beds and bikes and put them in new schools and we didn't have the money. It was a hard time financially.<sup>59</sup>*

Some family friends offered to look after two of the girls for a time and eventually the situation became more stable. In a few years however, the family situation was once again creating stress. Bert's eldest daughter ran away with an unsuitable boyfriend. Ann asked her grown sons to move out of home as they were using drugs and alcohol, having parties at home, and generally 'going off the rails'. In addition, the cold weather, particularly Christchurch's big snow of 1992, grated on Ann's nerves. Bert still felt he was not earning enough money. So in 1994 Ann, Bert, and Bert's youngest daughter migrated back to Sydney.

Once again, Ann was quite happy in Sydney. Both she and Bert had good jobs. Their youngest daughter finished high school and completed a nursing degree. Her two sons also followed them over to Sydney. They had lived in Sydney for eight years when Bert began to worry about their mortgage:

*We had a mortgage, a hundred thousand dollar mortgage which is nothing really in Sydney. But my husband moaned and groaned about this mortgage. He said, "Oh you know, we're getting old, we shouldn't have this mortgage". I said, "Well we don't really need to live in a four bed-roomed house with a swimming pool. We could move to a town house or something cheaper". But, "Oh yes, but I like having a swimming pool and it's nice to have space and I don't really want to move myself". [He] started this subtle business with, "Now if we went back to Christchurch, you could see more of your mother".<sup>60</sup>*

Bert's persuasions finally took root and in 2002 they moved back to Christchurch. They bought a mortgage free house and rental property. Bert's youngest daughter decided to travel after which she settled in Sydney. Ann's younger son who was now married also remained in Australia. Ann's eldest son followed them back to Christchurch. Ann enjoyed spending more time with Bert's eldest daughter and her children who had remained in Christchurch. However, a few years later this daughter moved to Perth with her children. Now all of Anne and Bert's children and grandchildren, with the exception of their dependent son, live in Australia.

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Ann and Bert enjoy life in Christchurch but Ann was shocked recently when Bert announced he was thinking of retiring. She realised that the loss of his income would limit their future options; moving back to Australia might be unaffordable. She described herself as ‘torn’. She would like to live near her children and grandchildren in Australia but knew it might not be financially viable. Even at the time of our interview she had no solution to her dilemma. Towards the end of the interview Ann reflected on the effect of all her migrations:

AO *It's been a big part [of my life], flitting backwards and forwards. I mean, going backwards and forwards to Australia has been part of my life since I was 21 and I'm now 67 so it's been quite a big thing. And adjusting and readjusting, you know, all the time.*

RB *What do you think that process has done to you, all that readjusting?*

AO *Oh probably screwed me up (both laugh). Oh it makes me discontented sometimes.*

RB *Why do you think that is?*

AO *Oh because I'm probably the sort of person that always thinks the grass is greener on the other side (laughs). Not so much nowadays, now that I've got more to do and more involved with things. When I didn't have very much to do I kept thinking about what might have been all the time.*<sup>61</sup>

Ann has moved between Australia and New Zealand more than usual, due to her marriages with other migrants and stressful family situations. But her story illustrates the complex and changing factors involved in decision-making about return migration. Although financial motivations were influential, Ann and Bert's family situation and lifestyle aspirations were even more important. Indeed, their moves were detrimental to their personal wealth. Ann reflected she and Bert had ‘*wasted a lot of money*’ moving between New Zealand and Australia. Her story also demonstrates the wider ripple effect that repeat migration has on migrants' families. Often as children grow up they may choose to stay behind or move on without their parents. A split trans-Tasman family is often painful, especially once grandchildren arrive.

## **From Australia to the world**

Although this thesis focuses on migrants' movements between New Zealand and Australia it is important to acknowledge that New Zealanders' trans-Tasman movements do not occur in isolation from other international travel and migration. As Chapter Three argues, many young Kiwi migrants saw Australia as the starting point of their OE. Often New Zealanders who

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

moved to Australia were looking for adventure and in later years fulfilled their ambitions of seeing the world. Furthermore a number of Kiwis in Australia moved on to other countries. In addition, a number of migrants married partners from another country apart from Australia or New Zealand, or found that their grown children moved on to other destinations. These relationships immediately gave them strong links to new countries.

### ***Adventure and travel***

Many young New Zealanders who moved to Australia dreamed of an OE where they would explore the wider world. The majority of these travel-oriented migrants achieved their desires even if not immediately. George Clarke did not travel around Australia as his ultimate goal was to do a world tour. George saved tenaciously and enjoyed backpacking trips around Europe in 1972, 1974, and 1976.<sup>62</sup> Murray Hunt fulfilled his travel ambitions after a year of working in Goldsworthy Mines in Western Australia. Paul and his friend journeyed through Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, and then to London after which Paul returned to Perth.<sup>63</sup> Jennifer Cooper was another migrant with a strong wanderlust. After a few years in Australia, Jennifer's aunt died, leaving Jennifer 3000 dollars. Jennifer decided to spend all of the money on travel. She had heard Sir Edmund Hillary speak in Wellington as a child, and as a result always dreamed of visiting Nepal. So Jennifer and her husband Bob left their son with Bob's mother and went trekking in the Himalayas for three weeks. Travelling was a priority for the Coopers; they sent their three sons to public schools and use the saved fees on travel. When Patrick, their eldest son, finished high school the Coopers spent a year in England on a working holiday. The younger boys went to school, and the family travelled through England and Europe in the term breaks.<sup>64</sup> Financially successful migrants often used international travel to justify their migration. Many narrators mentioned with pleasure their recent visits to places such as Alaska, Spain, Italy, England, and Asia.

### ***International connections***

Kiwi migrants who married someone from another country outside Australasia created further international links. Several narrators married someone from another ethnic background. Suzanne Belladonna's husband Vince is an Australian Italian. The Belladonna family have visited Sicily to meet Vince's extended family and explore their family roots.

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<sup>62</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>63</sup> Hunt, interview.

<sup>64</sup> Cooper, interview.

Murray Hunt married a Thai woman he met in Bangkok while he was holidaying there. He brought his wife and her four children over to Western Australia.<sup>65</sup> Matthew O'Brien met his 'English rose' in Kalgoorlie while he was there working in the mines. They spent a two year working holiday in Britain but in the end decided against staying permanently.<sup>66</sup> Chris Grey met his wife, Beatrice, in Argentina while he was on holiday there in the early 1980s. After the couple finally married in England (legalities were complicated by the context of the Falklands War) they came back to New Zealand for a year in order for Beatrice to gain New Zealand citizenship. Once the year was up they joined Chris's family in Perth. Although the marriage did not last, Chris enjoyed his involvement in the Argentine Cultural Group in Perth.<sup>67</sup> A relationship with someone from another culture or country gave New Zealand migrants in Australia international links as well as their trans-Tasman connections.

Overseas children or business partners could also add to migrants' widening webs of global networks. George Clarke's two children live in Germany and Britain. For George, this vindicated the way he brought up his children to be global citizens:

*Even when our children ... come back for holidays and they go back to Europe, we just drop them off at the airport, we don't say goodbyes ... It's important to do it that way because you're giving them that freedom to do what they want to do. Because they were very young when we travelled the world. They always travelled with us so they had a good head start when they left here ... You've got to educate your children to go out in the world, you know. Take them with you, introduce them to the world, then let them go. It's injustice to hold onto them ... When you see new things and how people do things it changes your way of thinking completely.<sup>68</sup>*

Julie Podstolki and Matthew Clements regularly visit their eldest daughter who lives in Paris working and studying as a flautist.<sup>69</sup> Matthew's numerous business



**Figure 47. George Clarke and family holidaying in New Orleans. Courtesy of George Clarke.**

<sup>65</sup> Hunt, interview.

<sup>66</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>67</sup> Chris Grey, interview by author, Perth, WA, Australia, 30 June 2010.

<sup>68</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>69</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.



connections in Singapore and Japan have given him a strong affinity with Asia. His frequent international travels have given Matthew a global perspective:

*Now when I think of the New Zealand–Australia relationship I see it in terms of the world, or at least in terms of Asia, much more than I do just thinking about the two countries together. And when I think of that I think, “Gee we haven’t really come very far. We came from Christchurch to Sydney to Perth. Out of the whole world we’ve come about this far” (holds his hand about a foot apart). So it doesn’t seem so big from that point of view.<sup>70</sup>*

Migrants who developed contacts in different countries often developed a worldview that was more international than trans-Tasman.

### ***Onward migration***

A number of Kiwis who moved to Australia continued their migration journey and spent time in another country.<sup>71</sup> Jeanne Cashman’s family spent three years in South Africa during the late 1970s when her husband Paul was posted there for work. At the end of their time in South Africa Paul was offered work in New Zealand but the couple refused in order to avoid living near Jeanne’s manipulative mother. Instead they returned to Sydney where they still live today.<sup>72</sup> Joanna Matheson, who moved to Sydney to study stage management at NIDA did a placement on the Edinburgh Fringe Festival during her degree. She enjoyed it so much that she came back to Australia to find work and saved up to return the next year. Then Joanna met her partner, an Englishman living in Australia. Because Joanna’s partner’s visa was about to run out the couple moved back to the United Kingdom. Joanna found it much harder settling in England than she had in Australia but soon received a job touring with various stage shows. After about seven years Joanna had a daughter. She eventually split from her partner but stayed in England a few more years completing a Masters degree. Finally, after 15 years in England, Joanna returned to New Zealand to be with her family.<sup>73</sup> Matthew O’Brien also moved to England so that his English wife could spend time with her parents. Although he enjoyed his time over there, after two years he brought his family back to Perth:

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> I only gathered stories of onward migration from Australia from migrants who currently live in New Zealand and Australia. Undoubtedly many Kiwi migrants in Australia move on to other international destinations and never permanently return to Australasia.

<sup>72</sup> Cashman, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Matheson, interview.

*MO But I had to come to the point where we were either gonna stay or we were gonna go. So I just made the decision for us. I said "Let's come back to Perth". So I bought 'em kicking and screaming. They didn't want to come back at all.*

*RB Why did you make that decision to come back?*

*MO Well because I could see that we would probably struggle over there.<sup>74</sup>*

Once again migrants made their decisions about moving on from Australia based on a mixture of relationship, economic, and lifestyle motives. International family networks, globalised job markets, and the desire to travel often gave Kiwi migrants in Australia strong connections to other international destinations. New Zealand migration did not occur only within the trans-Tasman corridor; migration patterns were often international and circular.

## **Internal migration in Australia**

The majority of New Zealanders' who migrated to Australia made at least one further internal move inside Australia. These internal migrations were not backpacking holidays around Australia; rather they were sizable moves where migrants relocated their entire household, and often family, to another city and/or state. Chapter Two highlights how New Zealanders in Australia tend to move in similar patterns to native Australians. The experiences of the narrators in my study reveal that New Zealanders' desires for career advancement, adventure, and a good lifestyle, which had first prompted migration to Australia, continued to influence their decisions of where to live.

The most common reason New Zealand migrants moved within Australia was to advance their career. Kiwi males, particularly those in the mining industry, often moved between different outback mines. John Husband made numerous moves around New South Wales towns in his work as an engineer. In his later years he settled in Canberra.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Murray Hunt lived in a variety of outback mining towns in Western Australia, moving from Goldsworthy, to Shay Gap, to Port Hedland in his work as a mining industrial arbitrator. Men who worked in the outback often split their time between their workplace and a bigger city. For example Bruce Ringer split his time between Gove in the Northern Territory, and the Sunshine Coast, then later Brisbane. He found it unsettling but preferable to spending all his time in the outback:

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<sup>74</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>75</sup> Husband, interview.

RB        *So how was that, shifting between places all the time?*

BR        *That was a bit unsettling I suppose, but it was work. You'd come home and you'd do all your work around home and then it was time to go again sort of thing. Now it's a more settled lifestyle.*<sup>76</sup>

Matthew O'Brien, at the time I interviewed him, worked two weeks at an isolated settlement outside Darwin at a gas plant, and then had two weeks off back at his home in Perth. He hated being away from his family but his wages were so good he put up with the lifestyle.<sup>77</sup> It was not just mining and engineering which necessitated moving city. Alexander Clifton migrated to Melbourne to do his Masters and PhD degrees. But the rarity of academic jobs meant he had to move to Newcastle University to find work as a history lecturer. He missed Melbourne, and although he grew to appreciate life in Newcastle, was pleased to find a lecturing job in Brisbane a few years later.<sup>78</sup>

Although migrants often moved to advance their career, lifestyle factors were also influential. Liz Brodie's family moved often because her husband John worked in the mining industry. Although Liz did not mind all the moves, the Brodies eventually settled in Sydney as it was closer to New Zealand and their family.<sup>79</sup> Matthew Clements also moved his family for work but then moved again for lifestyle reasons. Once Matthew started doing engineering work for mining companies he found himself flying from his home in Sydney to Perth almost every week. He liked the work but the travel was unsustainable. He told Julie, *'I really need to go and live a bit closer because I'm spending all my time over there and I don't see that changing'*. So Matthew dragged his family to Kalgoorlie. It was a 'huge culture shock'; Kalgoorlie had poor schools, a small population, and limited cultural and recreation opportunities. In their interview Matthew and Julie reflected on the experience and their family's subsequent move to Perth:

MC        *Lifestyle-wise it was very grim. I mean Kalgoorlie is a very limited place. I tried a bit of reverse psychology. I told them Kalgoorlie just had one dirt road with a shop on the corner and that's all it was. And so when they got there they thought, "Oh this is actually pretty good. It's got picture theatres and a supermarket. It's not like that at all. And the roads are actually sealed". I thought, "Gee that was really clever of me to do that". And that lasted for about three days and after three days they said, "But it's still a really horrible place". It certainly didn't last a year. When I say to people we were in Kalgoorlie for a year Julie always chimes in 'Well actually it was...'*

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<sup>76</sup> Ringer, interview.

<sup>77</sup> O'Brien, interview.

<sup>78</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>79</sup> Brodie, interview.

MC      *Four days and three hours was it (both laugh). So it became a question very quickly as the year approached. I think it started about three months into the thing, "What are we going to do? I'd better go and start looking at somewhere to live because we're gonna be moving out of here shortly". The compromise was that we'd move to Perth. I think within about seven months into the journey she was already looking at somewhere we could live in Perth. So we moved to Perth pretty much at the end of that year. Compared to Kalgoorlie, Perth was a paradise. So I always think if I bought them straight to Perth from Sydney they probably would have moaned and groaned about Perth. But having come from Kalgoorlie they really thought it was something else.*<sup>80</sup>

Even though work might be the main impetus for internal migration, New Zealanders still valued a good quality of life. Their choice of destination was often modified by concerns for their family.

Sometimes migrants moved around Australia to fulfil their desire for travel and adventure. Camilla Donaldson and her husband first settled in Sydney, later moved to Adelaide, and then on to Queanbeyan (just outside of Canberra). Camilla thought they had finally settled there but her nomadic husband soon sold up again and they headed back to Adelaide.<sup>81</sup> During her six years in Australia, Margaret Sale worked in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, and Alice Springs. She believed 'that to get know a country one had to know the people themselves'.<sup>82</sup> Her frequent moves helped her experience all Australia had to offer. Peter Potaka and his wife also moved around different parts of Australia in their work as teachers because they did not want to get too settled in any one place:

*We decided, "We're not going to go away, but we're not gonna put roots down in Perth". Because yeah, we'd always had it in our mind to go home, to come home. But we thought "Bugger it, let's go somewhere else in Australia"... Next day in the paper was an ad for teachers in Northern Territory. We filled it out and within three days they'd offered us a job. So we packed up our things and went.*<sup>83</sup>

Their decision to not settle but keep exploring Australia was the start of the Potakas' varied adventures in different parts of Australia. They taught at Aboriginal schools in Merrivale and Alice Springs and then had a three year stint teaching in Christmas Island.<sup>84</sup> Peter loved getting alongside the Malay and Indonesians on the Island as well as spending time with

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<sup>80</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>81</sup> Donaldson, written narrative.

<sup>82</sup> Sale, written narrative.

<sup>83</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>84</sup> Christmas Island is a territory of Australia, in the Indian Ocean.

other expat workers. With long holidays, no tax, good Australian wages, and standard \$40 tickets to Singapore, life on Christmas Island was a gateway to further adventure:

*You had a month in the middle of the year and you had your six weeks at Christmas. You know, when you don't pay tax you jump on a plane – pay 40 bucks, 20 bucks to get to Singapore – and then you buy a ticket. So we travelled. But we didn't travel in backpackers. We travelled in bloody flash hotels (laughs). So we went to Europe. One Christmas we spent in Austria and then we went to London for another one. We sort of made sure we got off the island and we travelled right through Asia.<sup>85</sup>*

For a few New Zealand migrants in Australia, adventure and seeing different regions of Australia was more important than settling in to one city and putting down roots.

## Conclusions

Migration is not a one-off event. As this chapter demonstrates, many migrants chose to return to New Zealand, some even crossing the Tasman Sea several times. Migrants also continued to travel internationally and migrate to countries other than Australia and New Zealand. Many migrants moved within Australia for work and lifestyle reasons. This fluidity of movement suggests several themes. Firstly, connections between Australia and New Zealand remained strong. The closeness of the two countries encouraged constant communication and contact, as well as enabling frequent return visits and migrations. Secondly, during the twentieth century, with cheaper airfares, higher disposable incomes, and globalisation, travel became far more accessible, and opened up New Zealand and Australia to the world. Thirdly, migrants' original motives for migration persisted in years to come. Their desire for adventure, travel, a better job, or a more fulfilling lifestyle continued to inform their decisions about where to live.

The second significant finding of this chapter is that relationships continued to influence migration decisions even after the event. Migrants almost always returned for New Zealand for the sake of their relationships rather than economic motives. Whether it was to be with extended relatives or to give their own children a New Zealand upbringing, family came first for return migrants. Relationships also affected international and internal migration. Those migrants who ended up spending time in other countries often did so because they had family there. And while internal migration usually followed career moves, migrants often modified or changed their living location if it did not suit their families.

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<sup>85</sup> Potaka, interview.

The third and perhaps most surprising finding of this chapter is that return migration to New Zealand could be a challenging experience. Clearly, visiting New Zealand on a holiday and returning to New Zealand permanently were two different matters. Although some migrants fitted back into New Zealand society and family easily enough, many migrants' expectations of a happy return were not met. New Zealand and they themselves had changed. Some relationships were no longer as meaningful or easy as before migration. Jobs could be hard to find and usually paid less. A few migrants' children were unhappy in New Zealand. Many migrants missed Australia. For these reasons over half of the migrants in my sample who returned to New Zealand ended up re-migrating to Australia. This return to Australia was once again facilitated by the continued connections with Australian friends, family, and media.

For most migrants, networks of connections between Australia and New Zealand, as described in Chapter Eight, were a comfort, bridging the divide of the Tasman Sea. Likewise, the relative accessibility of travel enabled adventure, improved career and lifestyle opportunities, and facilitated family reunion. But for some migrants such as Ann Orre, close trans-Tasman connections had hidden dangers. It was so easy to constantly make comparisons and reconsider past choices that a true sense of belonging could be elusive. Paul McEvedy, who migrated back to New Zealand and within Australia several times reflected on this feeling:

*RB        Where would you say is home for you now?*

*PE        (sighs) Probably in the middle of the Tasman ... As a sole individual I don't care. I'm an Australian, I'm a New Zealander, I can pretty much live anywhere. I'm reasonably solitary and the location isn't that critical. But it is to Rosanna [his wife] so we'll go back to New Zealand.<sup>86</sup>*

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<sup>86</sup> Paul McEvedy, interview.

## Chapter Ten: Memory and Reflection.

This chapter considers what kind of memories migrants recall and the reflections they make on these memories in oral history interviews. Previous chapters use both spoken and written narratives as sources to achieve a representative coverage of Kiwis' migration experiences. The following two chapters focus more specifically on the 35 oral history interviews I conducted in order to investigate how migration life stories are constructed and to what purpose. The first section of Chapter Ten investigates which autobiographical memories narrators recalled most clearly. While the exact details of narrators' stories differed, analysis reveals that some incidents, topics, and questions sparked more powerful, coherent memories. The second section of this chapter explores the meaning narrators gave to their memories from the perspective of their current situation. Life stories are evaluative. Narrators not only recall memories but also comment on their past actions with the benefit of hindsight. One aspect of this evaluation is identifying cause and effect; giving reasons for their decisions, actions, and current situation. Reflection is not restricted to actual events. Narrators also imagine alternate pasts and admit regrets.

Focusing on narrators' autobiographical memories and reflective evaluations is vital in understanding oral history as a source. Oral historian Alessandro Portelli claims that the specific value of oral history lies in changing memories, which reveal narrators' efforts to make sense of the past and give form to their lives.<sup>1</sup> Close analysis of narrators' memories and reflections reveals how and why they create the content of their life story. Focusing on memory and reflection also gives new insights into how narrators view their past from the perspective of the present. It highlights how the passage of time contributes bias, but also insight to a life history.

Because I conducted full life history interviews my narrators' testimonies covered many topics unrelated to their migration. In fact, these 'unrelated' memories and reflections indirectly highlighted how narrators felt about their migration experiences at the time of the interview. For example, nostalgia for a happy childhood may stem from feelings of homesickness. In order to understand the ongoing effects of migration on narrators, I consider their move to Australia within the context of other important life events.

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<sup>1</sup> Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," 38.

## Autobiographical memory in life histories

Autobiographical memories are retained for a number of reasons. Oral historian Alistair Thomson points out that an experience is more likely to be consolidated in long-term memory if perceived as significant.<sup>2</sup> As Valerie Yow and Donald Ritchie argue, humans cannot remember every detail from a scene; we take in only what seems important.<sup>3</sup> An event with dramatic impact that is subject to physical sensations or powerful emotions, is more likely to be ‘storied’, as Thomson puts it.<sup>4</sup> While recurrent processes are generally better remembered, a single unique incident that proves to have long-term significance is often particularly memorable. Memories perceived as significant are also more likely to be told and retold many times over. Thomson argues that ‘the creation and rehearsal of a memory story is fundamental to the consolidation of long term memory’.<sup>5</sup> Retelling stories, writing down accounts of the event in a letter or diary, looking at photos, or partaking in joint reminiscence sessions with friends all help narrators fix an event in their long-term memory.

Strong autobiographical memories in life history interviews are recognisable by their manner of telling and content. Within my interviews a ‘strong memory’ was a discrete story that narrators told, without prompting, for some time. These memories included detail, dialogue, sensory description, climactic conclusions, and emotions expressed through laughter, enthusiasm, or sadness. Narrators had sustained these memories through discussions and photo reminiscence sessions with family and friends. In terms of content, these memories were generally experiential rather than factual. Most narrators’ strong memories described significant personal events and the subsequent emotional responses and retrospective evaluations which made sense of these key moments in their life history.

I identified five common categories of strong memories in my 35 oral history interviews: sensory migration experiences; nostalgic accounts of childhood and youth; memories of heartbreak, loss, and conflict; work and career tales; and entertaining stories. This chapter considers why and how these types of experiences became vivid long-term memories for

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<sup>2</sup> Alistair Thomson, “Memory and Remembering in Oral History,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 84.

<sup>3</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 38; Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 32.

<sup>4</sup> Thomson, “Memory and Remembering in Oral History,” 85.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.



narrators. I also argue that these seemingly unrelated memories illuminate narrators' current feelings about their migration to Australia.

### ***Sensory migration memories***

Narrators' memories of arriving in Australia were rich in sensory detail and descriptive language even though they were not often retold. Alistair Thomson and James Hammerton found that some English migrants to Australia who have returned to Britain find audiences for their migration stories by writing memoirs and giving lectures.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, many New Zealanders in Australia do not share their migration memories as they feel they are dull. When I asked Frank Pawson if he ever talked about his memories of moving to Australia, he replied, '*No. Nobody's interested. Truthfully. You're the only one that's ever asked me*'.<sup>7</sup> This was a common response. Narrators did not view their move to Australia as significant enough to constitute 'history'. Nonetheless, new sensations captured Kiwi migrants' attention during the first few hours and days in Australia and became part of their long-term migration story. I will not detail these memories here as Chapter Five gives numerous examples of narrators' first sensory impressions of Australia's weather, environment, landscapes, foods, and multicultural society.

Narrators' vivid recollection of sensory migration experiences is due to the personal significance of migration rather than frequent reminiscence. The longevity of narrators' sensory memories, despite a lack of retelling emphasises that aspects of Australia startled and intrigued New Zealand migrants. Novel sounds, sights, tastes, tactile sensations, and smells lodged themselves permanently in migrants' long-term memories. New Zealanders are generally not seen as having a migrant experience because of their familiarity with, and similarity to, Australians. However, as Chapter Five argues, cultural similarity does not preclude unease. The persistence of narrators' sensory migration memories suggests that they did experience a mild form of 'culture surprise' as they realised that Australia's climate, landscape, ethnic make-up, and society was quite different from that of New Zealand.

### ***Nostalgic memories***

Narrators who enjoyed a happy upbringing talked at length about their experiences growing up in New Zealand. Their childhood memories often featured idyllic holidays, freedom from

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<sup>6</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*, 321.

<sup>7</sup> Pawson, interview.

parental supervision, a simpler lifestyle, and fun outings with family and friends. For example, Jennifer Cooper spoke at length about growing up on an orchard with her hippie parents. Some of her clearest memories were of the family's involvement in the Auckland Tramping Club (ATC):

*I can remember going to the Ureweras with him [her father]. Quite often if he was doing the driving and not the tramping — cause somebody had to take the truck round to the other end — he would take Hugh [her brother] or me with him and we would stay with the truck. I can remember finding we were camped in a nice place with a stream and I'd build dams and collect flowers and do all that sort of thing. Absolutely glorious. So we saw a lot of the countryside. And also the ATC was building the hut at Ruapehu — the Memorial hut — and I think my father was president at that stage. I think I've seen a photo of him opening the hut, you know at the hut opening. And so we used to go down and be involved in working bees and things like that too.<sup>8</sup>*

This memory is one of many which Jennifer used to depict her 'magical childhood'. In this story she mentions specific details and a family photo to strengthen her fond memories of times with her father and brother. Similar to Jennifer's account, many narrators' nostalgic childhood memories took place outside and with family, which suggests the importance of the New Zealand landscape and family in narrators' nostalgia.

Other narrators had strong memories from their first years out of high school when they became independent. This was often a time of new freedoms, romance and discovery. Julie Podstolski and Matt Clements spoke at length about their university and flatting experiences in Christchurch, first meeting, and subsequent romance:

*JP I remember, one of the first things that happened was I made a cup of coffee for each of us. And I must have been nervous because I put — I used to have two spoons of sugar in those days — so I put two spoons of sugar in. And then I put another two spoons of sugar in. And I remember he was thinking, "Wow she has a lot of sugar". But it was just nerves. That's one of my first memories. And we just really — oh that's right, he liked my music collection. I moved in with my records and I had quite a few David Bowie records and he thought, "Oh wow, these records are pretty good". And so we had a common interest in music. But really I think it was just we were just thrown together. So that's how we met.*

*MC Mm, so we were completely stunned that a Fine Arts student wanted to move into a flat with six engineers or something. You'd have to be crazy really. But I always remember she sort of marched in and said, "I'll have that room". And we were like, "I think we're supposed to be choosing here". But it was like too late you know. That was it. So she moved in. And yeah it was a bit like a hurricane moving into the flat. It was different sort of person. On my part I think I was very impressed that she was an artist. This is something that's come through from my mother's side. She was very much brought up versed in the arts, [they] were a very important part of her heritage ... So I was impressed by the fact. When she moved in she had these huge paintings, you know the size of that television, of super real cows ... I remember*

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<sup>8</sup> Cooper, interview.

*having to carry these things in. It's kind of an abiding memory I have, moving these paintings inside.*<sup>9</sup>

Their memories are striking because they include very specific detail (two teaspoons of sugar), dialogue, and humour. Julie's knowledge of Matt's side of the story (*'He was thinking 'Wow she has a lot of sugar''*) revealed this memory had been previously discussed. In their kitchen there was a photo taped up on a cupboard showing Julie holding a picture of Mick Jagger over half of Matt's face. Julie noted that the photo often sparked reminiscence: *'That picture on the wall there that we showed you, that gets a lot of questions. Almost everyone who comes in here has a look at that and asks about it'*. She also noted that their three daughters like to hear about how they had met. Stories that narrators had previously shared with family often contained emotion, detail, and humour.



**Figure 48.** Suzanne fishing in Picton on a childhood holiday, 1967. Courtesy of Suzanne Belladonna.

Nostalgic memories often aroused powerful emotions in narrators. This was partly because nostalgic memories helped narrators remember loved family members. Suzanne Belladonna's memories of fishing with her father at Picton were an important connection to her deceased, and much missed, father. Suzanne and her family still often holiday in Picton when they visit New Zealand.<sup>10</sup> Family stories often persist because they are recalled at family get-togethers. Rosa Tanga had happy memories of growing up in a big family, but admits that the memories stick because they are often retold. She reflected, *'I think because I was number seven the same stories tend to get recycled around; sometimes you're never quite sure if you remember them or if it's just if you've heard them so many times'*.<sup>11</sup> Nostalgic memories were also powerful

because narrators used them to identify key moments in their personal development.

Alexander Clifton felt his time studying history at the University of Canterbury was *'the*

<sup>9</sup> Podstolski and Clements, interview.

<sup>10</sup> Belladonna, interview.

<sup>11</sup> Tanga, interview.

*making of me intellectually*'. He positively associated these years with his career as an academic, and therefore felt '*nostalgic about them [those years] rather than hankering for them or being homesick for them*'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, migrants often admitted that they viewed the memories of their youth through rose-coloured spectacles. Narrators' nostalgic memories identified key moments in their lives that explained their present identities and bound them to New Zealand kin.

Narrators also emphasised strong memories of New Zealand upbringings to maintain their connection to New Zealand. Toni Te Kowhai's nostalgic memories of her grandmother's Rewana bread<sup>13</sup> and homemade plum jam sparked homesickness for New Zealand. The smell or taste of these foods pulled '*on the heartstrings*' and put her in a '*time warp*'.<sup>14</sup>

Unsurprisingly when Toni visits New Zealand she spends most of her time in Rotorua where she grew up, soaking in the familiar environment. Indeed, on trips back to New Zealand narrators often revisited childhood haunts. During a recent visit to Wellington, Diana Harlow took her grown daughter to visit her old school. Although she used to hate school, more recently she realised that it '*did do something good for me*' and joined her Old Girls Association.<sup>15</sup> A number of narrators joined the Old Friends website in recent years to link up with past schoolmates or attend school reunions. Nostalgic memories are a reassuring aspect of life stories; they emphasise the formation of narrators' identities while also linking them to loved ones and their homeland. They give narrators a sense of continuity between their pre and post-migration lives and relationships.

### ***Memories of heartbreak, loss, and conflict***

The third type of strong autobiographical memories in narrators' life histories were stories of heartbreak, loss and, conflict. Often these accounts of family dysfunction, death, or illness were accompanied by tears, anger, or frustration. These vividly emotional memories are known as 'flashbulb' memories.<sup>16</sup> Flashbulb memories are created when an event has special personal significance and is accompanied by a heightened emotional state. The resulting memories endure, even if they are not often talked about.<sup>17</sup> In their interviews narrators

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<sup>12</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>13</sup> Traditional Māori bread.

<sup>14</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

<sup>15</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>16</sup> Henderson, *Memory and Forgetting*, 56.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 59–60.

recalled negative emotional experiences more clearly than positive memories. Although happy events (such as falling in love or having children) were important to narrators, they usually described these experiences briefly or with clichés. This reticence could be due to the personal nature of such tales or to a cultural distaste for sentimentalism. Yet, narrators still shared private, sad, or fearful stories. Dramatic, usually negative, events are of pivotal importance in a life story and are imprinted on the memory in rich emotional detail.

Flashbulb memories of difficult events often caused narrators to re-live upsetting emotions during interviews. For example, Joanna Matheson became visibly upset when she reminisced about contracting Sydenham's chorea while at Intermediate school:

*At that stage my two little sisters were like just learning to walk and they were really excited that I was at home. So they used to come in, then I would hit, knock them over because I couldn't control my arm, and then I would get upset, then they'd get upset ... Then they [her parents] went back to the doctor. He said 'No, you have to stay in bed'. I used to fall out of bed. We had these beds that had a little bed head with a little drawer attached to it and I'd keep knocking it and hitting myself and my Dad had to take it off. I remember that being quite traumatic because I was obviously really ill but I didn't really understand. And I had friends come round initially but then I got too upset because I kept hurting my little sisters. So I ended up going and staying with my grandmother in Taita ... I didn't realise I was upset by that.*<sup>18</sup>

The story ended with Joanna crying, surprised at the power of memory to renew difficult feelings from her past. She was shocked at the strength of her reaction. She never talked about the experience with anyone outside her immediate family before and did not often recall this time. Likewise, when John Husband recalled hearing about his sister's death he commented that it was '*one of those things you just never forget*'. As he talked, John found himself '*getting choked up*' and reflected, '*it's just like it was yesterday*'.<sup>19</sup>

While some strong emotional memories were unconnected with migration, others were very relevant to migrant experiences. Strong memories of homesickness are the most obvious examples of difficult memories related to migration. Distance from family in New Zealand often led to great heartbreak, especially in the face of illness or death. Traumatic events were often difficult for migrants who had limited support networks in Australia. But often the connection between difficult memories and migration was implicit. The most emotionally charged stories in Trina Campano's life history were the death of her parents, her experiences

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<sup>18</sup> Matheson, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Husband, interview.

in the Sydney bushfires, and her Australian sister-in-law's death from cancer.<sup>20</sup> While her parents' deaths were inherently traumatic, her distance from them at the time made the memory far more upsetting. In fact, she was unable to speak about her mother's death in any detail as she found it too harrowing. Her experience in the Sydney bushfires was exacerbated by her feelings of isolation. Her husband was away on a business trip and she had no close family nearby. Unused to bushfires, she found the experience particularly terrifying. When Trina talked about her sister-in-law's death, it was clear that living in Sydney strengthened her relationship with her husband's Italian family. As a result of migration, the death was far more painful. She experienced the cultural differences of a European funeral and grieving process from the inside and was indelibly marked by the experience. Migration altered narrators' lives, including their emotional experiences. While migration does not necessarily cause emotional events, it can change the tenor of such experiences. When analysing migration narratives it is vital to consider all powerful negative emotions, even if they seem unrelated to migration, as they often contribute to a fuller understanding of narrators' migration narratives.

### ***Work memories***

The fourth common type of strong autobiographical memories that emerged from these interviews were work stories. Male narrators in particular often talked at length about their career, giving a detailed chronological account of their working lives. The strength of work memories is due to several factors. Charlotte Linde, in her work on life histories, argues that most narrators use their job to help them understand their own lives. Their choice of career path demonstrates who they are as a person, and confirms that they have made correct life choices. Narrators' jobs are often central to their self-perception and identity.<sup>21</sup> By telling stories about their work, narrators illustrate key beliefs about their character and life journey. For example, George Clarke's narrative featured work stories that explained his identity and confirmed his decision to move to Australia. George, who migrated to Australia in 1969 talked at length about his career in which he became the first Māori superintendant of a Sydney prison. His work stories showed his pride in achieving a successful career and financial stability. During the interview, he told a number of detailed and fascinating stories about his cultural intervention work with high-risk Māori and Pacific Islander prisoners.

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<sup>20</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Linde, *Life Stories*, 4.

Cultural intervention work for ‘his people’ was meaningful and connected to George’s Māori identity. In his narrative (which will be investigated in the following chapter), work memories consistently emphasised his devotion to achieving goals, career success, cultural identity, and passion for helping other Māori. Work also often provided the context for ‘entertaining’ stories. Work stories were often strong due to being fixed in long-term autobiographical memory through rehearsal.

Narrators also used work stories to illustrate that migration marked a positive turning point in their life history. This approach revealed their determination to view their past optimistically. Recent scholarship reveals that our brains are hardwired to place high value on our past and faith in our own decisions. Tali Sharot writes,

This affirmation of our decisions helps us derive heightened pleasure from choices that might actually be neutral. Without this, our lives might well be filled with second-guessing. Have we done the right thing? Should we change our mind? We would find ourselves stuck, overcome by indecision.<sup>22</sup>

Male narrators often moved to Australia for career or financial reasons and were positioned as breadwinners, so recalling a successful career validated their decision to migrate. For example, Murray Hunt talked at length about his work as a warehouse manager and industrial relations officer at various Western Australian mining sites. Murray valued his career because of the financial rewards:

*I’d never seen that sort of money in New Zealand. Mum and Dad had never had that sort of money. I can always remember Dad telling me, he said, “You don’t know how lucky you are”. He said, “When I was your age if I had to buy a suit for work I’d have to save up and it would possible take me three or four pays to actually be able to afford to buy a suit”. He said, “Here you are” – this was on New Zealand wages – “You can go out and buy a suit today or on your next pay day and still have all your ancillary costs taken care of”.<sup>23</sup>*

Although Murray still felt somewhat ambivalent about his decision to migrate and missed New Zealand, he justified his decision to stay in Australia by his lucrative and interesting career. Many narrators attributed their success in Australia to the work they found upon arrival. Australia was often considered the ‘lucky country’, because it provided narrators with opportunities and financial security.

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<sup>22</sup> Tali Sharot, “The Optimism Bias,” *TIME magazine*, (Saturday 28 May 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Hunt, interview.

### ***Entertaining memories***

The final category of strong memories consists of stories that narrators perceived as entertaining. These stories were humorous or adventurous; narrators depicted themselves as straying from their comfort zone and experiencing new, unusual, or even dangerous situations. Common themes in entertaining memories were: getting lost or into trouble in a new place, working in remote settings, or encountering criminal activities. Narrators had often related these memories to friends or family previously. In conversation, the ability to ‘tell a good story’ is very important. Linde argues that good stories must be reportable; that is, events that are unusual in some way or run counter to expectations. ‘Reportability’ depends not just on an event but on the relationship between the speaker and listener.<sup>24</sup> Narrators often chose to tell me stories about life in Australia that they thought would be novel or surprising to me as a fellow New Zealander. In addition, narrators felt a sense of shared national kinship with me which encouraged them to relate humorous anecdotes that stressed Australians’ differences. No doubt they used similar selection criteria when entertaining New Zealand friends and family.

Migration provided a rich source of material for many narrators. As mentioned previously, New Zealander migrants were attuned to aspects of Australian life that were different to those of New Zealand society, and their entertaining stories were usually concerned with new and different aspects of Australian life. Moreover, many narrators who moved to Australia in their youth were motivated by a desire for travel, adventure, and freedom. They often embraced experiences that were spontaneous, risky, and new. Accordingly, a sense of nostalgia for earlier youthful experiences informed some entertaining stories. By telling a good story narrators were able to reassure themselves that their youth and migration had been worthwhile and exciting.

Entertaining stories were frequently polished and engaging due to their prior rehearsal and striking content. Narrators relied on hyperbole, humour, dialogue, accents, and pacing to capture my interest. For example, John McNeil related a long and detailed account of how he earned his Sydney Taxi Driver’s license by nefarious means:

*Here I am, in a part of Sydney I have no clue where I am, at rush hour Friday afternoon in charge of a vehicle I can barely drive. So I thought, “Obviously I’m meant to find my way back to the driving school”. So I eventually – by luck more than good management – found my way*

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<sup>24</sup> Linde, *Life Stories*, 22.



*back to the driving school and the Māori at the desk said, “Ah you got your license, good. OK, now next thing you need to do for your taxi license, you have to sit what’s called a location test. And you’ll pop along to Rosebank, Rosebury rather – which is where the traffic unit of the police department was — and make an appointment there. And you’ll sit the test. You’ll sit and write a written paper to test your knowledge of Sydney, so it’ll be a written paper”. And he hauls out of drawer, “Now here’s the answers to the questions” (both laugh) “25 dollars thank you, good bye”. (laughs). I was starting to wake up to what was going on by about this time (laughs). So, I went off and made an appointment for a couple of weeks time and turned up and just sat the location test. Sure enough the questions answered my answer sheet so I got a hundred percent or thereabouts and I was let loose on the public of Sydney with a taxi license (laughs).<sup>25</sup>*

John stated that while he does not reminisce much about his time in Australia, he occasionally tells ‘funny stories and anecdotes’. His taxi tale is clearly one of these entertaining stories due to his use of dialogue, detail, and humour. One narrator, Annette Moody, acknowledged the performative construction of entertaining narratives with her statement, ‘*I’m doing a bit of acting with you today, to keep you interested*’.<sup>26</sup> Narrators’ entertaining tales remind us that oral history interviews are partly a performance and are told to amuse the interviewer and an imagined audience.

## **Retrospective reflection**

Life history interviews are made up of more than memories. Because they are narrated from the present narrators also include current interpretations, reflections, and judgements on their past experiences. Linde calls this ‘reflexivity’; the ability to relate, reflect, understand, comment on, judge, and even enjoy one’s past self from a removed standpoint.<sup>27</sup> In my 35 oral history interviews, narrators frequently made reflective evaluations about their life experiences. They used hindsight to evaluate past decisions and events. I also asked a number of questions in interviews which encouraged narrators to reflect specifically on their migration experiences from the perspective of the present.

## **Causation**

When narrators tell their life stories most unconsciously use causation to tell a convincing story and convey a sense of achievement and closure. Philosopher Noël Carroll argues that causation is a key component of narratives. Earlier events in a sequence are often necessary for subsequent events. A person’s needs, desires, plans, ideals, and commitments are motivational states which generate questions about whether these intentions will be achieved.

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<sup>25</sup> McNeil, interview.

<sup>26</sup> Moody, interview.

<sup>27</sup> Linde, *Life Stories*, 120–3.

When narrators use causation to answer these questions they bring a sense of closure to their narrative.<sup>28</sup> Porter Abbott writes that humans continually look for the causes of things. We often link what comes after with what went before. By bringing a collection of events into an ordered sequence we normalize these events and show they are plausible. People tend to prefer explanations which demonstrate meaning rather than random chaos.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Linde points out narrators often prefer to have multiple reasons for a decision. Multilayered causation proves that narrators' choices are richly determined, suitably motivated, and woven back in time. Convincing causation guards against the idea that one's life is random.<sup>30</sup>

Narrators commonly used causation in their narratives to identify reasons for their decisions. Many migrants talked about how earlier experiences shaped their personality and led them to their current situation. Daphne Park felt that her upbringing with socially conscious parents who ran a private retirement home and cared for people with mental health issues helped her become a speech pathologist and psychologist:

*It [her upbringing] sort of gave me this approach that they were people and you can work with people – and they won't be like you are or like I am – but you can work with what you've got. And I think that sticks in your head ... I think that really affects you. You can see that change is possible and that these people are ok and they're not frightening – yeah and these were pretty institutionalised people from their past. So yeah, it sort of makes you feel courageous in that area and not so afraid I guess.<sup>31</sup>*

Other migrants described how early difficult experiences had made them more resilient. Toni Te Kowhai stated that her dysfunctional family upbringing made her '*all the stronger*' and determined to succeed as she did not want to ever burden her New Zealand family.<sup>32</sup>

Narrators frequently used causation to explain their motivation for migration. As Chapter Three highlights, migrants usually gave more than one reason for leaving New Zealand for Australia. Some motives were short-term while others reached back into childhood. All narrators generally followed a cause and effect pattern in their narratives where the past influenced subsequent events and decisions.

Narrators also used causative reasoning when they reflected on how their personality had changed over the years. Narratives are an important way of maintaining personal identity and

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<sup>28</sup> Noël Carroll, "Narrative Closure," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 135, no. 1 (August 2007): 12.

<sup>29</sup> Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 41–2, 44, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Linde, *Life Stories*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

a sense of self. Linde writes that the ability to create a coherent (but changing) depiction of one's own personality is the achievement of a normal personality. When narrators talk reflexively they stand apart from their younger self, and comment on their own actions. They can accept that their younger self acted wrongly and reveal understanding of past actions.<sup>33</sup> Many narrators reflected that their younger selves were more naive and that the intervening years have changed them. When Mildred Royce looked back she realised what a big decision it was to move to Australia aged only 18:

*DR        It was a big decision when I think about it and I was only 18 at the time. It was scary. I was flying out on my own for the first time ever without any family round me and I was just so naive. I was so frightfully young. I think I was a young 18.*

*RB        What do you mean by naive?*

*DR        I think just very innocent. You know, when I think about the young person I was at that time I smile because she was young. She was very innocent and totally unaware. I remember travelling with some other friends and they were going, "Now you've got to be very careful when you do this" ... And I was totally unaware. "What are you talking about?" ... Just totally unaware of personal safety and things like that. Because you think ... that you are beyond being hurt – that you are almost infallible, or that no one can injure you."<sup>34</sup>*

Mildred was aware of her younger self as a different person, but also fond of the 18 year old she was. Other migrants talked about how they had changed. John McNeill's narrative showed considerable awareness of earlier character flaws which he did not perceive until years later:

*JM        I still hadn't worked through this skiting. I was still working through all this and being obnoxious and not pulling my weight ... I still had an awful lot to learn.*

*RB        Were you aware of it at the time or is it just in retrospect?*

*JM        I think it's mostly in retrospect. Looking back I'm horrified at some of the things I did, you know. I think "How could I?" I shudder to think of them. So there was that about it – I was learning to grow up."<sup>35</sup>*

Migrants usually felt that their life experiences had improved and matured their character. By attributing past mistakes to their youth narrators reconciled their younger selves to their current selves.

Migrants often noted that migration was a key component of their personal growth. Narrators felt that moving to Australia made them more confident, independent, resilient, and accepting

<sup>33</sup> Linde, *Life Stories*, 20–3, 98–101.

<sup>34</sup> Royce, interview.

<sup>35</sup> McNeill, interview.

of different cultures. Peter Potaka reflected that his adventures in Australia helped him grow up, broaden his outlook, and feel confident in his own abilities.<sup>36</sup> Colleen Szabo thought that moving to Australia greatly increased her acceptance of other cultures:

*It's just made me aware of different cultures. The Aboriginal culture I found fascinating. I'm very comfortable with the Māori culture having grown up and went to school with them. They're very different from the Aboriginals. And then having a Hungarian husband and meeting other Hungarians – it's broadened my whole outlook on life. And the social work experience is valuable. So having met all these varied people, that's just made a difference to me. I'm much more accepting than I was when I left in 1974.*<sup>37</sup>

Although migrants had no way of knowing for sure how their characters would have developed if they had stayed in New Zealand, they attributed positive changes in themselves to the transformative power of migration.

Migration did more than impact narrators' personal qualities. Many narrators used causative reasoning to identify migration to Australia as a pivotal decision which gave them opportunities and determined the future direction of their lives. Migration is often a pivotal moment in life histories. James Hammerton, in his oral histories with British migrants to Australia, found that their stories often relied on the moment of migration as the key life turning point which gave coherence to their narratives.<sup>38</sup> When I asked Kiwi narrators how migration fit into their life story many answered that it was a 'big' or 'significant' part. Migrants often started off by justifying this claim in terms of years. David Cavanagh reflected, *'I think it's [migration] probably a major part. It's been, well it's over half my life now. I spent 23 years in New Zealand and 30 years in Australia. It was actually 30 years last year [since] I first went. So it's been a long time'*.<sup>39</sup> Many migrants went further and reflected that migration was a turning point in their lives. Jeanne Cashman felt that moving to Australia *'changed the course of my life completely'*, because she was able to escape the negative influence of her manipulative mother.<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Archer mused that moving to Australia started his adult life:

*RB        If you were to look at your life as a whole, and all your memories, how does migration fit into it?*

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<sup>36</sup> Potaka, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Szabo, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Hammerton, "'Family Comes First'," 24.

<sup>39</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Cashman, interview.

JA        *It fits into it I suppose as a (pause) as a transition point. It marks because of its timing – I was 19 when I came over – it sort of marks the end of my childhood if you like and the beginning of my adulthood. I moved away from my family. See, I lived with my family until I was 19. So it was those sorts of things. It was a distinct point from which I was independent and I was an adult and I made my own decisions.*<sup>41</sup>

Other migrants reflected that moving to Australia gave them many new experiences as well as greater financial, career and educational opportunities. Alexander Clifton felt that most of who he was today stemmed from his decision to move to Australia:

*I think all the things that I am and all the things that are in my life have really been produced in Australia. I'm a product of my life, of my decision to move to Australia. If I had stayed in New Zealand I have absolutely no idea what I would be doing, but it would be vastly different to what I'm doing now. My career would be different. I'd obviously be living in a different place. I obviously wouldn't have met my wife; it wasn't like I came across with her. I wouldn't have my son. So all the things that I value on a day to day basis in my life: my little boy, my friends, my home, my job – they've all got "Made in Australia" stamped all over them. Not "Made in New Zealand". So New Zealand to me is sort of pre-history.*<sup>42</sup>

A few Kiwis even believed their migration was due to 'Fate' or a higher purpose. For example, Ceris Nieuwland stated '*I feel like I must have come to Australia for a reason because I'm now studying vet [Veterinary Science] which is what I've always wanted to do*'.<sup>43</sup> In hindsight, many New Zealanders made their migration decision more significant than it actually seemed at the time of the move.

A minority of narrators did not view migration as a pivotal moment. Moving to Australia was still important but was part of a wider pattern of migration or travel rather than a turning point. Tony Harris and his wife had previously lived in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Tony felt that moving to Brisbane was just part of his life's adventure: '*It's just another step in the chain. It's just part of life you know. I mean it's not of huge significance. It's where we are at*'.<sup>44</sup> When Mildred Royce reflected that her life 'had been influenced to a large degree by migration' she meant more than just the move from New Zealand to Australia: '*If I were to take an even broader historical picture and take from the fact that my parents migrated to New Zealand [from Samoa], I would have to consider that my life has been influenced by ... moving internationally*'.<sup>45</sup> Mildred also referred to the Māori migration to New Zealand, her return migration to New Zealand, and possible future migration to the United Kingdom.

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<sup>41</sup> Archer, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Clifton, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Nieuwland, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Tony Harris, interview.

<sup>45</sup> Royce, interview.

Migration was vital to her life story as an ongoing historical pattern rather than a one-off event. Indeed Kiwis who made a return migration to New Zealand were less likely to see their time in Australia as central to their life story. Trina Campano initially saw her move to Sydney with her husband as a ‘stepping stone in his career.’ Now that her family has returned to New Zealand she sees it differently:

*I think I took most of the opportunities that were ever sent my way or our way. But I also think that yeah, we do have chapters in our book, and we’ve finished that chapter and we’ve moved on to the next one. So I think it was just probably part of a bit of a pioneering adventurer sort of thing to do. While I didn’t go into it seeing it as an adventure, I probably do now.<sup>46</sup>*

Trina’s comment shows that now she sees migration as just one part of her life. Her reflection also reveals that she realised her perception of migration had changed with hindsight.

### ***What might have been: counterfactual thinking and regrets***

Counterfactual means, literally, contrary to the facts. Counterfactuals are conditional statements, which propose an alternative version of the past, present, or future.<sup>47</sup> A few oral historians have investigated how narrators create alternative pasts in their life histories, especially when recalling dramatic events. Alessandro Portelli, in his 1988 article, ‘Uchronic Dreams: Working-Class Memory and Possible Worlds’, observed that many of his working class narrators emphasised ‘not how history went but how it *could* or *should* have gone, focusing on possibility rather than actuality’.<sup>48</sup> Portelli found that narrators used counterfactual history to highlight the failure of official history to describe their own experiences. But Portelli realised that narrators also used uchronic dreams to reconcile themselves to their current situation.<sup>49</sup> Angela McCarthy in her book on Irish and Scottish migration briefly considers her narrators’ counterfactual reflections. McCarthy notes migrants used comparisons with family and friends who had stayed behind in Ireland and Scotland to guess the effects of not migrating. A number of migrants felt that if they had never moved they would have remained close minded and unconfident.<sup>50</sup> In the following section I apply

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<sup>46</sup> Campano, interview.

<sup>47</sup> Neal J. Roese and James M. Olson, “Counterfactual Thinking: A Critical Overview,” in *What Might Have Been: The Social Psychology of Counterfactual Thinking*, ed. Neal J. Roese and James M. Olson (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1995), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Uchronia is a fictional genre in which the author imagines what would have happened if a certain historical event had not taken place, or represents an alternative present. Alessandro Portelli, “Uchronic Dreams: Working Class Memory and Possible Worlds,” *Oral History* 16, no. 2 (1988): 46.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>50</sup> McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration*, 216–20.

Portelli's and McCarthy's ideas on counterfactual reflections to Kiwi migrants' oral histories, but also expand the area of inquiry to include regrets.

Narrators' regrets are closely related to their counterfactual reflections. Zeelenberg defines regret as a 'cognitively based emotion that we experience when realising or imagining that our present situation would have been better had we acted differently'.<sup>51</sup> Because regret involves a comparison between what is and what might have been, Neal Roese describes regret as the emotional offspring of counterfactual thinking.<sup>52</sup> Psychological research distinguishes between regrets over past actions and inactions. Studies reveal that over time people ameliorate the pain of regrettable actions by seeking silver linings and reducing cognitive dissonance.<sup>53</sup> By contrast the pain of regrettable inactions grows as distant failures to act seem more inexplicable.<sup>54</sup> Over time generalised regrets over inactions become stronger than specific regrets over past (active) choices, because these are psychologically less painful.<sup>55</sup>

Analysing counterfactual thinking and regrets reveals the meanings that narrators give to memories of past events and how they have come to term with these recollections in the present. In the interviews I conducted I purposely asked questions like 'Would you do anything differently?', 'Do you have any regrets?', and 'Do you ever think about what might have been?' At first I expected narrators would be uninterested in answering such abstract questions. To my surprise I found that many narrators had already considered these questions. Their answers helped me understand how they constructed their life stories to give meaning and coherence to their past and present.

As I have already outlined, many narrators used causation to pinpoint their departure for Australia as a pivotal turning point in their life histories. As a result, migration became the moment from which narrators imagined counterfactual pasts. Elizabeth O'Connor, who was a particularly self-aware narrator, commented on this phenomenon:

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<sup>51</sup> M. Zeelenberg, "The Use of Crying over Spilled Milk: A Note on the Rationality and Functionality of Regret," *Philosophical Psychology* 12(1999): 326.

<sup>52</sup> N. J. Roese, *If Only: How to Turn Regret into an Opportunity* (New York: Broadway Books, 2005).

<sup>53</sup> T. Gilovich, Medvec, V. H., & Chen, S., "Commission, Omission and Dissonance Reduction-Coping with Regret in the Monty-Hally Problem," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21 (1995).

<sup>54</sup> T. Gilovich, Kerr, M., & Medvec, V. H., "Effect of Temporal Perspective on Subjective Confidence," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64 (1993).

<sup>55</sup> Ian M. Davison and Aidan Feeney, "Regret as Autobiographical Memory," *Cognitive Psychology* 57 (2008): 401.

*That's one of the things migration does. I think if you stay in one place you don't think about that because you don't have to. You're living your life and you're just in the one place. I think when you make a big choice – that could be to move cities but it's also particularly true if you move countries – you always wonder about what would have happened had you stayed or done something different. Of course you do. You have a parallel life. And that's kind of the pain of it really. You have your parallel life and you wonder about it. So I think migration is a double-edged sword.<sup>56</sup>*

Portelli also notes that narrators' uchronic ruminations coincide with the peak of their personal life; the moments when they played an important role or were involved as a participant.<sup>57</sup> New Zealand migrants to Australia depicted their move to Australia as a major peak of their personal life where they took a different path from what might have been.

When it came to imagining their alternative 'non migration' pasts, narrators acknowledged the impossibility of really knowing what would have happened but still made educated guesses. My findings agreed with those of Angela McCarthy; narrators imagined counterfactual scenarios by using family and friends as comparative benchmarks. Narrators also used knowledge of their life experiences before migration to guess how their lives would have turned out if they had stayed in New Zealand. Benjamin Pittman who moved to Sydney in December 1979 had thought about his alternative history even though he felt it was rather pointless:

*We often talk about this but in a sense it's probably a bit unproductive because you made a choice and who knows what would have happened. I really don't know so it's a bit of an impossible scenario. Probably I would have carried on teaching. I probably would have been extremely politically active. I think certainly I would have been very much a part of developments within the Māori community in seeking justice under Te Tiriti O Waitangi.<sup>58</sup> All of those things which are very close to me. I don't think I would have been a quiet person under a bush at all. And in fact some of my very close relations are some of the firebrands of activism in New Zealand history.<sup>59</sup>*

This reflection reveals the past that Benjamin hopes he would have had if he had not migrated. His guesses are based on his knowledge of his own character and interests as well as those of his family. Narrator's counterfactual reflections were generally realistic.

Benjamin's alternative past was unusually positive; most narrators' counterfactual pasts were plausible but negative. A significant number of narrators claimed that if they had stayed in

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<sup>56</sup> O'Connor, interview.

<sup>57</sup> Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), 99–100, 108.

<sup>58</sup> The Treaty of Waitangi.

<sup>59</sup> Pittman, interview.



New Zealand their lives would have been less successful. Gayla Wilson compared her situation with her brothers and sisters in New Zealand and felt she was far less financially stressed. Consequently, she believed she enjoyed a more positive attitude to life.<sup>60</sup> As mentioned previously, migrants often felt that migration changed their character for the better. They bolstered this belief with counterfactual reflections. Diana Harlow reflected that staying in New Zealand would have been a terrible mistake:

*I think if I had stayed in New Zealand, I would be a very different person. I think I would be less worldly. I would have been shy, less sociable. Yeah, I was quite a naive trusting young thing when I first came here. I soon got that knocked out of me. They're sort of different people here ... They seem to be much more outgoing. New Zealanders I think are more reserved in general. Yeah, they're not quite as out there as Australians are, you know, so to keep up with them you've gotta sort of come out of your shell a bit more. No, I'm glad I did. I think I would have been a pretty dull and boring person if I'd stayed in New Zealand all my life and taken the safe option and stayed in radiography. Oh I don't know, I just, the thought of it makes me feel ill. I think, "Oh God, no, how boring". I would have felt I'd wasted my life. I really would've. I just needed to get out there.*<sup>61</sup>

Narrators often described their counterfactual self who never migrated as less accepting, adventurous, and open to new experiences. Their negative reflections revealed their need to validate their migration decision.

When I asked migrants if they had any regrets, most were adamant that they had few if any. Some stated that held a philosophy of no regrets. Benjamin Pittman stated, *'I have a rule in life, never regret anything. You make decision on the basis of the best information at the time and once you make a decision that's it. I never look back and I never regret anything. I just think it's very unproductive'*.<sup>62</sup> Narrators hardly ever regretted their move to Australia.

Migration was an event which was almost always described positively, even by migrants who had difficult times after moving to Australia or returned to New Zealand. Toni Te Kowhai divorced her husband after arriving in Australia. At a later stage one of her children was imprisoned. She still misses New Zealand greatly. And yet Toni stated, *'I don't regret that I came here'*.<sup>63</sup>

But on closer investigation many narrators did have regrets even if they claimed otherwise. Kiwi migrants regretted past decisions which they felt could have changed their lives for the better today. Just as the research suggests, regrets of past inaction were strongest. The most

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<sup>60</sup> Gayla Wilson, interview.

<sup>61</sup> Harlow, interview.

<sup>62</sup> Pittman, interview.

<sup>63</sup> Te Kowhai, interview.

common regret was not attaining tertiary education. Other narrators missed not having much time with New Zealand family and friends, while some regretted lost business opportunities or romantic relationships. David Cavanagh was one such narrator who demonstrated this tension between regret and no regrets. When I asked David if he would do anything differently he responded:

*No, no, no, wouldn't change anything. Because I think it's too much of a lottery. There's – I don't know – it's sort of like it's so random. You can't – if you force it, it's not a good experience ... everything, anything, any experience is the same. If you force it it's not a good experience in the long run because it's going the wrong way. If you go with the flow and take advantage of it, then it can be a really [great] experience and you can get a lot of benefits from it. I've had, well, you know, married, got four kids, got a house.<sup>64</sup>*

Yet the following excerpt reveals David's regrets about how he treated his early girlfriends in New Zealand due to his immaturity:

*DC        Looking back now, I made some huge mistakes (laughs). It was just stupid you know.*

*RB        What kind of mistakes?*

*DC        Oh like, probably girls that I should have taken more interest in and I didn't because I just didn't value what I had. And yeah, it's strange, it's sort of like – we were very good friends and I haven't seen them since. I probably could have handled things a lot better. But I think I just wasn't mature enough. I was more interested in partying, having a good time – and they were as well – but I wasn't looking for a long term future and it could have well been a long term future.<sup>65</sup>*

The tension between regrets and no regrets in David's narrative did not mean he was currently unhappy. Rather it revealed that he struggled to reconcile his positive life philosophy and regrets. Portelli noticed similar contradictions in his narrators' stories. He found that people insisted on the usefulness and success of their lives by stressing the positive aspects of reality. By saying their history was 'good' they claimed to have made something of themselves. On the other hand, personal experiences also forced narrators to admit at times that their lives contain mistakes, deferred goals, limited gains, and personal discontent.<sup>66</sup>

Narrators used a number of positive strategies to minimise regrets and justify past decisions in their life stories. The first technique was to count their blessings. Narrators reassured themselves that in spite of regrets their current situation was satisfactory. Frank Pawson regretted not starting his own business in Australia. However, he comforted himself that he

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<sup>64</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>65</sup> Cavanagh, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, 112–13.

chose not to ‘because of the strife and bother of owning a business and trying to look after it with the family’. He then added ‘I’ve made a good life here, doing what I’m doing’.<sup>67</sup> In Frank’s example we see another way of minimising regret; counterfactual thinking. He tells himself that owning a business would have been detrimental to his family life. Indeed, as already demonstrated, migrants’ alternative pasts were often negative so that they could justify past decisions. Narrators also dealt with regrets by philosophising that past difficulties taught them constructive lessons and improved their character. Daphne Park initially struggled finding work and a place to belong in Melbourne. But she valued these ‘tough experiences’ as she feels they made her adaptable, resilient, and sympathetic of other migrants’ difficulties.<sup>68</sup> Other migrants reminded themselves that it was only with hindsight they had regrets. At the time they had done the best they could. Rosa Tanga reflected on the role of hindsight when she thought back on the breakdown of her marriage in Australia:

*You know, so it’s always one of those things that are a matter of perspective. But at the time I would have said to you that when I left him, that I left with a clear conscience; that I really truly believed there was nothing else I could have tried. But you know now were 10 years or so down the track, you know, I’m sure there was different things I could have done. But it doesn’t really matter.*<sup>69</sup>

All these ways of dealing with regret relied on narrators accepting their past mistakes and understanding that the past cannot be changed. Bruce Ringer had regrets about business failures and mistakes but concluded ‘*You learn to live with that, the good with the bad. On the whole I’m happy*’.<sup>70</sup>

Another way several narrators explained their regrets was consistently blaming others. Ian Craih describes ‘bad faith narratives’ as stories where the teller consistently emphasises the wrongs done to them by others. Craih writes that such stories are not communications, explorations, or developments of meaning; instead they close down meaning and deny agency. In these stories narrators try to convince themselves that regrets are not their own fault.<sup>71</sup> Ann Orre demonstrated an example of this reasoning (not typical of her whole narrative) when reflecting on her lack of higher education:

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<sup>67</sup> Pawson, interview.

<sup>68</sup> Park, interview.

<sup>69</sup> Tanga, interview.

<sup>70</sup> Ringer, interview.

<sup>71</sup> Ian Craih, “Narratives as Bad Faith,” in *The Uses of Narrative: Explorations in Sociology, Psychology and Cultural Studies*, ed. Molly Andrews, et al. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2004), 67.

*I don't think they really were that interested in education. They weren't that interested in encouraging me to be educated. I think if anything I'm probably self-educated. Like we didn't have very many books in the house. I mean when I was 15 and a half or something my mother said 'Oh you'll have to leave school ... because I really can't afford to buy you all these shoes and dresses and thing that you want. So I really think you should go.' And I don't think I needed much persuading, so I left school at 15 and a half which I've always thought was wrong, you know. And I've always regretted it. But anyway, that was how it happened.<sup>72</sup>*

I did several interviews (not mentioned here out of ethical considerations) where narrators regularly blamed others for business and career failure, estranged relationships, and unachieved life goals. Unable to deal with their regrets in a positive way, these narrators seemed discontented, thwarted, and unable to learn from past mistakes.

## Conclusions

Analysing narrators' autobiographical memories and reflective evaluations highlights the unique qualities of oral history as a source. It reminds us that narrators' memories are usually told in the context of a conversation. Many narrators' autobiographical memories were built up over time and rehearsed in private and shared reminiscence. Entertaining stories in particular highlight the fact that oral histories are determined by the relationship between narrator and listener. Often the narrator is performing with the intent to help and entertain the interviewer. Narrators create their life story anew in each telling, responding to a specific relationship dynamic and setting.

In order to respect narrators' gift of their life story, and gain a full understanding of its contents, historians need to pay attention to all parts of narrators' life stories; not just those sections which are immediately relevant to their research topic. Because narrators viewed their migration as a turning point experience, rich with new and emotional experiences, most retained strong migration memories. Because this thesis focuses on the migrant experience, it would be easy to pay attention only to these migration memories. But as this chapter reveals, narrators' life histories also contained many striking and emotional memories of childhood, work, adventure, and grief. These autobiographical memories were vital to migrants' life stories and to ignore them would be limiting. In fact, analysing strong 'non-migrant' autobiographical memories leads to a deeper understanding of narrators' perceptions of their migration. Migrants' nostalgia for their New Zealand childhoods was often linked to a longing for New Zealand; work stories justified the migration decision; experiences of grief

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<sup>72</sup> Orre, interview.

could be exacerbated by distance from New Zealand, and entertaining stories often focused on new experiences enabled by migration.

This chapter also highlights the value of analysing migrants' reflections. Migrants used hindsight to make causative judgements about how past events had affected them. They intuitively included causation in their stories, making sense of how their lives had turned out. Causation helped narrators create a coherent, plausible life history which explained their current situation and personality. Such causative assumptions often relied on counterfactual thinking. Many migrants imagined plausible but negative alternative histories, based on comparisons with New Zealand kin. These counterfactual theories revealed that most narrators justified their migration on the grounds that it made them happy and successful. However counterfactual thinking was closely linked to regrets. In accordance with psychological research, most narrators' regrets arose from past inaction in romantic, business, family, or educational situations. Many narrators accepted or justified regrets by identifying silver linings or learning opportunities in past mistakes. The few narrators who regularly absolved themselves of responsibility for past regrets were less able to create a coherently positive life story. Most narrators' reflections clearly demonstrated that they identified migration as a key pivotal moment which changed their personality and life course for the better.

Considering narrators' memories and reflections also highlights that oral history interviews allow narrators to make sense of their life from their current perspective. Research shows that a life review causes narrators to reintegrate their regrets into their mental framework, in a way that makes sense to them and fits into their current self understanding and world view.<sup>73</sup> Narrators' life histories, although ostensibly about the past, are shaped by the present. Narrators select autobiographical memories and make evaluative reflections which will help them convince themselves and their listeners that they have made correct decisions. Narrators even imagine negative alternative pasts to justify their life decisions. The following chapter uses a close analysis of autobiographical memory and evaluative reflection to give deeper insights into how several individual narrators constructed validating life stories.

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<sup>73</sup> Cynthia M. Torges, Abigail J. Stewart, and Kathi Miner-Rubinob, "Personality after the Prime of Life: Men and Women Coming to Terms with Regrets," *Journal of Research in Personality* 39 (2005): 150.

# Chapter Eleven: Narrative Analysis of Migrants' Life Histories

When oral historians clarify their methods of narrative analysis they provide a deeper understanding of how individuals construct their narratives as well as highlighting their own decision making. This chapter contributes a new approach to the already rich field of oral history analysis. I adapt an approach from feminist psychology called the *Listening Guide* and apply this method to three life histories of New Zealand migrants to Australia. The three analytical criteria I use are those explored in the previous chapter: autobiographical memory, causation, and counterfactual reflection. As recent work by Francesco Ricatti demonstrates, a close reading of only a few migrants' lives provides readers with a nuanced view of their emotions and motives. Accordingly I analyse three migrants' narratives in order to provide a detailed demonstration of this narrative analysis technique. A close reading of Liz's, George's and Elizabeth's use of autobiographical memory, causation, and counterfactual reflection reveals how they retrospectively composed their narratives around key themes. Migrants used these personal themes to give their narratives meaning and depict migration as a pivotal moment in their life. This chapter explains my own reasoning as an author and researcher, but more importantly provides a deeper understanding of Liz's, George's, and Elizabeth's migrant narratives.

## Narrative research and oral history

This chapter contributes a new approach to oral historians' use of narrative analysis methodology. The broad field of narrative research focuses on investigating how stories are structured and produced.<sup>1</sup> Oral historians increasingly borrow ideas about narrative analysis from the social sciences although they often take a more eclectic approach rather than use methodologies such as grounded theory or the biographical interpretive method.<sup>2</sup> Many oral historians explicate the theoretical understandings behind their analysis in order to acknowledge, as Valerie Yow points out, that the process of analysing data and selecting

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<sup>1</sup> Corrine Squire, Molly Andrews, and Maria Tamboukou, "What Is Narrative Research?," in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Corrine Squire, Molly Andrews, and Maria Tamboukou (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Joanna Bornat, "Reminiscence and Oral History: Comparisons across Parallel Universes," in *Critical Advances in Reminiscence Work: From Theory to Application*, ed. Barbara K. Haight and Jeffrey D. Webster (New York: Springer, 2002), 347.

excerpts for publication is biased by researchers' attention to some aspects of testimony, and not to others.<sup>3</sup>

A number of notable oral historians provide different suggestions about how to understand narrators' use of memories and reflections in oral histories. Alessandro Portelli argues that in order to identify genre in oral history, one must identify the themes that deal with the relationship of the individual to public life.<sup>4</sup> Portelli points out that most narrators make their stories coherent by moving between different spheres: politics, community life, and personal experience.<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Anderson and Dana Jack stress that it is important to analyse interviews without imposing our own theories on them. Anderson and Jack suggest three helpful ways of immersing oneself in interview: listening for narrators' moral language; identifying their meta-statements (reflections), and teasing out the logic of the narrative.<sup>6</sup> Another significant contribution to narrative analysis is Alistair Thomson's concept of dual 'composure'. Thomson argues that narrators not only order, select, and construct their memories by drawing on their cultural resources; they also create coherent life stories which provide a feeling of personal composure. Thomson's own work with Anzacs uses these ideas to untangle myth from memory and identify silences on aspects of war.<sup>7</sup> While my method for analysing oral history interviews is drawn from feminist psychology, it is heavily influenced by oral historians' emphasis on studying narrators' memories, creation of coherence, and reflections.

## **The *Listening Guide* approach**

I adapt the *Listening Guide* method of narrative analysis as it encourages a close reading of a transcript for specific narrative patterns. Carol Gilligan, a feminist psychologist, created the *Listening Guide* method in the early 1980s and subsequently outlined and used the theory in her book *A Different Voice*.<sup>8</sup> Typically psychologists and sociologists use the method to

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<sup>3</sup> Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 6–7.

<sup>5</sup> ———, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*, 21.

<sup>6</sup> Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 137–9.

<sup>7</sup> Thomson, "Anzac Stories"; Alistair Thomson, "Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia," in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

investigate the psyche and relationships of women and girls.<sup>9</sup> Sociologists Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet utilized the *Listening Guide* in their research on motherhood and postnatal depression (Mauthner) and heterosexual couples sharing housework and childcare (Doucet). They wanted a method which would keep respondents' voices alive and acknowledge their own role in the research process.<sup>10</sup> Mauthner and Doucet argue that studying data and identifying key issues is usually an implicit, intuitive process, shaped by the researchers' personal, political and theoretical background. They use the *Listening Guide's* method of reading transcripts to make this process explicit.<sup>11</sup>

I modified the *Listening Guide* by introducing my own oral history criteria of inquiry. The original *Listening Guide* method reads for plot, the use of the first person, relationships, and cultural context. Instead, I read through the full transcripts of each interview highlighting the narrators' use of strong autobiographical memory, causation, and counterfactual reflections. I paid attention to the order, patterns, and frequency of these different narrative techniques. I used these criteria of as they are key areas of study for oral historians engaging in narrative analysis, and also highlight the way narrators' present perspective influences how they tell their past. By considering how narrators remembered, ordered, and reflected on their past, the overarching themes which inform the composure of their life stories became apparent.

Multiple close readings of narratives reveal underlying themes which might not be otherwise apparent with a more general unspecified analysis. Liz's, George's and Elizabeth's interviews were based around the same questionnaire (see Appendix B) although I also asked additional questions specific to each narrators' unfolding story. In spite of similar questions, narrators generally followed their own interests; they talked about what was important to them. Some narrators answered a question briefly while others would find the same question inspiration for several minutes of reminiscence. Using a close reading style analysis emphasised the subtle thematic differences in narrators' responses. In spite of these thematic differences, Liz, George, and Elizabeth all used narrative techniques to create a compelling life story which justified their past decisions and made sense of their present situation.

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<sup>9</sup> Carol Gilligan et al., "On the *Listening Guide*: A Voice-Centered Relational Method," in *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design*, ed. Paul M. Camic, Jean E. Rhodes, and Lucy Yardley (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2003), 157.

<sup>10</sup> Mauthner and Doucet, "Reflections on a Voice-Centred Relational Method," 119.

<sup>11</sup> Natasha S. Mauthner and Andrea Doucet, "Reflexive Accounts and Accounts of Reflexivity in Qualitative Data Analysis," *Sociology* 37, no. 3 (2003): 120–3.



## **Liz Brodie.**

Liz Brodie moved from Hastings, New Zealand to Australia in 1967, aged 21. Initially she worked as a governess on an outback station in Warren, New South Wales, and then later moved to Sydney. She married a fellow New Zealand migrant, John, in 1970. The couple moved around Perth, Kalgoorlie, and Tasmania with John's work in the mining industry before settling in Sydney.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Memory in Liz's narrative***

Many of Liz's memories are shaped by shared reminiscence. Her first memory was of sitting beside her auntie who was driving a leaky old car through pouring rain. Other family members have told Liz that this occurred when she was nearly three. Some of her childhood memories are shared with her two older brothers. She still jokes with them about their mother chasing them around the dining room table with a clothes brush: *'We still laugh and say "Where did that clothes brush go?"'* She went to a Catholic girls' boarding school and many of her memories of this time are shaped by reminiscence. Liz said, *'I've still got some great friends that I made at school that will come over here or [I'll] go over. We still keep contact and have the most hilarious reunions when we do'*. She also shares her stories with others. She had clearly told the tales of working in Warren and family holidays in the Australian desert before and accompanied these stories with photos. She also mentioned her family's longstanding joke about how she used to ring her Mum in New Zealand with the smallest household question. Liz's story of meeting her husband was shaped by shared memory as she included events from which she was absent. When I asked her if she reminisced about her migration experiences she replied, *'Oh we would laugh about some of the experiences but not specifically as a migration experience. We'd laugh about perhaps when I first came over and things had happened but it's usually the funny experiences'*. Her regular mention of shared storytelling reflects the importance of her friends and family. Furthermore, her nostalgic conversational focus on 'funny' memories reveals her optimistic focus.

Indeed, Liz's emphasis on positive memories meant she underplayed negative memories. Her memories of her years at boarding school exemplify this bias. In her first mention of boarding school she recalled that it was apparently her choice to go there due to the wider range of science subjects although she was *'not quite sure whether that's true or not'*. She then said,

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<sup>12</sup> All information and quotations taken from Brodie, interview.

*'even though it's not the easiest of experiences I've still got some great friends'*. Her next mention of boarding school was an entertaining story of the disciplinary system:

*The nuns were very strict. You used to get these notes at the end of the week on your behaviour and I was fairly loud and noisy and in the noisy crowd. On Sunday morning you'd all be standing there in the assembly and they'd read out your notes and there's 'Excellent' and all these goody-goodies would go up. Then there were 'Very goods' and they'd all go up. And then you'd look around the room – there's about 20 of you left (laughs). And then some of you would get what was called 'Fair'. And if you got Fair you weren't allowed out for the day. And you were meant to be going out to your auntie's and you knew she always cooked a Bomb Alaska for you for lunch. But you had to ring and say "I'm sorry Auntie S, I can't come out. I'm gated again". "Again!" she'd say, "That's three weeks in a row" (laughs). So, that was a bit unfortunate.*

Here Liz used humour to make light of the strict discipline. She then reflected that the experience *'was quite scarring, because they were fairly mentally cruel'* but concluded *'some of us, we survived and thrived and carried on'*. A few minutes later she mentioned her boarding school experience again with a strongly negative emotional memory:

*When I started boarding school it was a terrible experience. It was probably the only time in my life I was ever really homesick. And I was so skinny. I wouldn't eat for the first term. I absolutely hated it and cried and just wouldn't eat at all. They had to fatten me up on some sort of malt extract to stop me fading away. And then after that first Easter break, then I sort of settled down.*

After sharing this memory she once again emphasised the life-long friends she still has from boarding school and related a happy recent reunion with one friend. The boarding school memories show Liz's initial reluctance to dwell on negative memories. Even once she became confident enough to share the darker side of her boarding school experiences, she ended on a positive note, reaffirming the benefits of continued friendships. Her determination to conclude sad memories with optimism was a reoccurring feature of her narrative.

Liz's strongest memories had themes of adventure, freedom, and opportunity. When talking about her happy childhood she focused on her freedom and lack of adult supervision. Her two longest and most detailed memories described her experiences working in Warren, Dubbo, NSW during a flood, and travelling through the Simpson Desert with her husband and children. She used dialogue, humour, and vivid description in her anecdotes. She consistently described these times as *'amazing'* experiences. The memory of a flood in Warren was particularly evocative:



**Figure 49. Liz Brodie in Warren, c. 1967, during an outback flood.**  
Courtesy of Liz Brodie.

*While I was there it rained. And it was, that was also amazing because the kids had never seen rain. They'd never in their lives seen rain. And they just went outside and went wild ... and when it rains you'll get ten inches of rain in a day. [It] just bucketed down and it was a quagmire and we were then stuck. Because the property – the homestead to the front gate was about six miles, about 10 ks. Once it rained we couldn't get out. We were stuck and isolated ... We used two truck bonnets, welded them together and we could row across the*

*Marthaguy creek to get out to get some supplies ... You know, it was another amazing experience.*

Liz also revelled in describing her family's adventures during a holiday in the Simpson desert:



**Figure 50. Liz Brodie in homemade raft during flood in Warren, c. 1967.** Courtesy of Liz Brodie

*The back window of the vehicle had broken when we left the tar seal – and John's hair is white and he had red dust through it. It looked like a dog with mange. We walked into this camp that was for miners, where we knew we could have a meal because we'd just about run out of food and water and everything. And we walked in there and Wendy [her friend] and I both went to the loo and we looked in the mirror. Oh my God,*

*we looked at ourselves and it was such a shock. I can remember Nick [her son] crying his eyes out when he saw the lights in the distance because we'd had no power, [and] we'd nearly run out of water and we let the kids drink low alcohol beer because we didn't have any water. Those were great experiences.*

She also described experiences in Kalgoorlie and Tasmania that were unusual and adventurous. This suggests that a strong theme of Liz's life story is her high valuation of adventure and exploration.

### ***Causative reflection in Liz's narrative***

In her narrative Liz retrospectively identified causes for her decisions and changes in her character. Although she stated that her migration started as a holiday, and that she '*didn't make a conscious decision to migrate*' she still articulated a number of reasons for her decision to leave New Zealand. She had always wanted to travel to England. Her friend had moved to Australia and encouraged her to visit. She also left to escape her social life: '*New Zealand's small at many times. And I was going out with someone and it just – I didn't want to settle down over there. So that precipitated me to expand the horizons*'. Liz consistently used cause and effect to explain further travel within Australia. Her frequent moves around Australia were due to her husband's job. The couple's decision to move from Perth to Sydney was prompted by John's father's death. When they were unable to access New Zealand quickly from Western Australia they decided that they needed to move to the eastern states. Likewise Liz also reflected on how her upbringing and experiences shaped her character. Growing up with sociable and hospitable parents encouraged her to have international exchange students stay with her own family in Australia. Her experiences in boarding school, though difficult, resulted in independence, resilience, and strong friendships. Her initial naivety on arriving in Australia has disappeared due to all her varied experiences. Her dislike of her mother's disapproval has made her determined to never reprimand her own children for their life choices. Once again, there was an overriding positive slant: Liz felt that her decisions and life experiences had worked out for the best.

However, one area where Liz struggled to maintain this positive causal pattern was her reflections on migration's influence on her relationships with New Zealand kin. Here, her thinking was less certain. Generally she was adamant that moving to Australia had not separated her from her family. For example she said:

*I'll pop over. Any excuse. I've always been fortunate enough to have the money I suppose to do it. I wish I could [have] every dollar for what I'd spent crossing the Tasman, but it means that you do keep those contacts. Like I've just had my other brother staying, I've just had Meryl [her sister-in-law] staying. She was here in January. So we had a huge amount of family contact.*

At another point she reasoned that she had kept in just as close touch as if she had lived somewhere remote in New Zealand such as Invercargill. But at times in the interview, Liz admitted that living in Australia meant she missed being there for sick or dying relatives, which was very painful. She wanted to view the long term results of her move to Australia as

positive and struggled to convincingly explain away problems caused by separation from her family.

### ***Counterfactual reflection in Liz's narrative***

Although Liz stated that her migration was '*an evolving experience*' her counterfactual reflection indicated that she saw it as a turning point in her life. Her imaginary alternative pasts were negative in order to justify her decision to migrate. When I asked her what might have been if she had never moved to Australia she responded, '*I'd probably have married the local farmer and settled down. No, not really. I think I would have been swallowed up. For me it seems right to have moved. We've done some huge travel in Australia ... that you could never [have] had in New Zealand*'. She assumed that her life in New Zealand would have been boring and unable to provide adventure.

When Liz talked about regrets, she admitted that the distance from her family was difficult at times but always reemphasised the importance of having no regrets:

*There were times I suppose we thought, "Oh perhaps we should move back". And it's important for the kids to have cousins and family and everything like that. But when you don't have it, you just keep fostering what you've got. So it's important to use what you've got, not hanker for something else.*

Her focus on the positive side of migration was not dishonesty; rather it was part of how she was able to maintain an overall belief that migration was the right decision for her and her family.

### ***Major themes in Liz's narrative***

A close reading of Liz's narrative clarifies the major themes of her story. The first theme is that family are very important to her. Many of her memories were shaped by shared reminiscence with family. She emphasised her regular visits back to visit New Zealand. Her major regrets were to do with distance from her family and yet she simultaneously stressed that migration had not damaged her relationships. The second theme was that migration was a key moment in her life which opened her up to adventure and independence. Liz's strongest memories, both from her childhood and adult life, were often to do with extraordinary, 'amazing' experiences. She felt that staying in New Zealand would have denied her these opportunities. The third theme was that Liz was determined to take a cheerful perspective in her life story. Even when she talked about painful experiences, the pattern of her narrative

always ended on an optimistic note. She attempted to explain away and justify difficult times which allowed her to compose a coherently positive life history.

## George Clarke

George Clarke migrated to Sydney in 1969 to work in the Newcastle Steel Works. He then started a career in the Sydney

Corrections system and became the Governor of Parramatta Prison in 1994. He married in Australia and has two children who live overseas. He still works rehabilitating Māori and Pacific Island prisoners in Sydney prisons.<sup>13</sup>

### *Memory in George's narrative*

George's strongest memories were connected to his work and career success. Even his childhood memories were linked to this theme. He mentioned several times a memory (accompanied by a photo) of himself as a small boy riding to school on a horse. This image had become a symbol for how far he has come in life – from a rural Māori upbringing in New Zealand to a successful career managing Sydney prisons: *'I've got photos there of us going to school on horseback ... and one of myself in my Prison Governor uniform; how it's transformed this fellow from sitting on a horse with no saddle or bridle, to where I came from'*. George accompanied a few nostalgic



**Figure 51. George Clarke, Governor of Parramatta Gaol, 1994. Courtesy of George Clarke.**



**Figure 52. George and his cousins riding to school. Courtesy of George Clarke.**

<sup>13</sup> All information and quotations taken from Clarke, interview.



recollections of growing up on his farm with the reflection, ‘*it was tough but I think it brought out the best in us*’. Another early memory, reinforced by his mother’s memories, was of his father’s deathbed:

*I recall what my Mum was telling me all the way along that before my father passed away he gathered all his children around him. And he had a stick there and pointed it to me – I was five years old – and said to my mother, “When he grows up he’ll leave home and never come back”. And I realise that’s true. And it’s a fact that this is home. I’d go home more often but this is where I belong. So a dying man’s word is gospel.*

George clearly gave this memory great symbolic significance as a prophetic moment which confirmed the rightness of his decision to live and work in Australia.

The vast majority of strong memories in George’s life story are about his working experiences in Australia. He included detailed accounts of his first job with other European migrants in the Steel Works at Newcastle. He told an entertaining story about how he presented himself at the gates of East Maitland prison and talked himself into his first corrections job. He also had numerous stories of his work managing various Sydney prisons. These memories emphasised his persistence and willingness to confront those in leadership when they were wrong; the stories usually concluded with outcomes which proved George was correct. The following example comes from his description of working with Pacific Island prisoners:

*When I was Governor of Parramatta jail in 1994, the Commissioner then approached me and asked me to be part of the committee to manage Asian gangs in prison. Because Asian gangs, in particular Vietnamese gangs, were a big issue in the early 90s. So I was part of this committee of five superintendants to look at how we could manage Asian gangs in prison. But before I became part of that Committee I said to the Commissioner, “Personally, I think you’re looking at the wrong people. You need to look at Māori and Pacific Islanders”. “Oh no, we’re having problems with these people”. So anyhow, it must be about three years ago, I received a call from the Assistant Commissioner. He says, “Listen you were right. How about we take you off line and now [appoint you] as the Director of Pacific Island Programmes?”*

George had many detailed memories about his cultural intervention work with Māori and Pacific Island high risk prisoners. Most of his memories demonstrated the success of his culturally sensitive and spiritual intervention programme. It was clear that his work with ‘his people’ was very important to him and was a major part of his identity.

A striking feature of George’s memories were their origins in his public speaking work advising Māori about migration to Australia. Māori and Pacific Island groups in New Zealand and Australia engage George as an inspirational speaker due to his role as ‘Māori made

good'. Indeed he constructed his life memories as an exemplar to other Māori who moved to Australia. His interview responses often started out as personal memory but then segued into more general advice. Usually he organised his memories around an instructional theme rather than one event. Rather than give details about his life, George would be sidetracked into making educational generalisations. For example at one stage in the interview I asked him about the hard times he experienced after arriving in Australia. This was his answer:

*I think getting used to having a healthy bank account wasn't easy. We were always out partying and all that. And it was, "Oh no, maybe next weekend I know I want to go [out] but I might give it up". Or "I wanna go home this year, but if I do, my bank account'll go down. I might just leave it to the following year". Or things like that, "Oh, I want to do a trip a trip overseas [but] hang on a minute". But have that bank account there, take out insurance, you never know what could happen to you ... People want you back home and they don't have the money to send you back there. What's going to happen? You know, all these things come into play. Too often people said, "Oh we've had this young Māori boy [who] has died. We want to fundraise". They want to take his body back to the marae in New Zealand'. I said, "Why didn't you take any insurance out?" "Oh no, this and that". So all those things come into it. They didn't plan their move. It's going from the pan into the hot fire. You know you can't do that, you've got to prioritise. You got to plan these things.*

George's narrative initially focused on his own decisions but quickly turned into advice on financial planning for Māori in Australia. This excerpt highlights several of his favourite topics: the importance of adjusting to a new culture; leaving behind cultural customs and lifestyles which impede success, and setting goals. When I reconsidered George's interview I realised this narrative pattern revealed the way that he saw his life story from the present. From his current perspective, his earlier hard work, saving, investment, goal making, and planning were the key to his success. His work with Māori and Pacific Islanders in Australian jails has allowed him to refine and share his experiences on successful migration. Thus a major theme in George's migration narrative is 'poor boy made good.' His concern for other Māori and Pacific Island migrants encourages him to use his life story as an instructive lesson in achievement.

### ***Causative reflection in George's narrative.***

George's major causative theme is his belief that success or failure originates from personal choices rather than external circumstances. For example, he always attributed his success to his own efforts: saving, persistence, goal setting, and hard work. The following quotation is one of many similar reflections on the value of self motivation:

*I like to sit down and say to myself, "This is where I am. This is where I want to be in five years. Now how can I get there?" And then set a pathway and every year say, 'Well OK, the*



*second year, by the fifth year I want to be here". Sometimes you get there a lot quicker if you really work on it, and sometimes maybe a bit longer due to a couple of things. But if you remain focused you'll get there. And that's what life's all about I think.*

The corresponding side of this view of life is that George sees the root cause of problems for Māori in Australia as arising from their own poor decision-making rather than racism or unfair systems. For example, he blamed Māori expectations of free accommodation and food from family when they migrate as the reason for lack of success. He stated, *'it's not giving away your Māori values; it's surviving. It's pointless having Māori values and not surviving'*. He often claimed that Māori needed to adjust: *'The world changed, we have to change with the world, take the good and move on with it'*. He disapproved of Māori who blame the system or others for their problems. He tells Māori who blame Pākehā for stealing their land to *'clean your backyard first'*. George dislikes it when Māori migrants to Australia complain they are passed over for a job because they are Māori:

*Too often I sit on panels and Māori people lose out [on] a job and they blame it because they're Māori instead of looking at it and saying, "Well ok I didn't get the job. How can I be different? Where did I go wrong? How can I improve that?"*

Likewise, he identified the social problems amongst Māori and Pacific Island migrants in Australia as due to their decisions on where to live and work and how to raise and discipline their children. These judgements reveal George's causative view that individuals create their own lives.

George credits migration with being a positive turning point in his life. He stated, *'it was the right move I think. It was the best thing I did'*. He described Australia as a *'land of opportunities'*. Unsurprisingly, he clearly articulated his motives in moving to Australia as financial. He moved after his friend told him they could earn more money in the Newcastle steel works than in Auckland's Pacific Steel. George certainly felt that he had succeeded financially in Australia through his hard work and property investments. Significantly, he credited his move to Australia as important, not because it magically transformed his situation, but because it was the impetus he needed to change himself:

*I think moving to Australia was the best decision I ever made. It made me independent. I didn't have all those whanau around me to say, "Oh you know he ought to have this, have that". Everything was given to you [in New Zealand]. [In Australia] you were out there, you fought it alone. And you had to sit down and plan and prioritise.*

Rather than crediting migration as changing him, George believed that migration gave him the motivation to change himself. Once again his driving worldview was of self-made success.

### ***Counterfactual reflection and regrets in George's narrative***

George's alternative past in New Zealand was negative. He attributed this to a lack of support and educational aspirations. When I asked him what he thought his life might have been like if he stayed in New Zealand he replied:

*It wouldn't have been this good. I'm so sure it wouldn't have been this good, I know, if I lived on [there]. Because my mother always say to me, "Oh why don't you leave school at 15 and then get a job on a farm, cutting scrub or whatever, working in the shearing gang?" ... As I said, my Dad died and left a very young family. I was only five years old and my Mother was too busy trying to get bread on the table for us. There was no encouragement to take education on board and move ahead. We always said, "Oh leave the education to the Pākehā. Let's do the hard work". Well that was a bad statement by them.*

George also implicitly set up a negative example of his brother who stayed in New Zealand, and even though he has just come to Australia recently, has no drive or future plans. George had no regrets in coming to Australia. His only regret was that he did not focus more on his education in New Zealand as qualifications would have hastened his career progression. His reflections on his alternative past are negative because he locates them as arising from New Zealand. Although he continues to visit New Zealand and care for his ancestral land, he will never return permanently. He stated, *'to go back there and live after what I've achieved here, I think is going backwards. And I like to keep ahead, moving forward'*. New Zealand belongs firmly in his past.

### ***Major themes in George's narrative***

A close reading of George's narratives helps explain the nature of his interview. It reveals how he constructed a life history which emphasised his self-made success story. George has found satisfaction and meaning in his successful career and financial security. His narrative emphasises how his planning and effort paid dividends over time. His use of cause and effect reinforces this theme of the self-made man; it reveals how his belief in individual effort underpins his life philosophy. George's use of his life story as a helpful exemplar for other Māori makes sense of why his story often slides into motivational advice. Furthermore, considering his alternative past shows that George locates all his regrets in New Zealand.

Migrating to Australia freed him from the dangerous complacency of his Māori whanau and allowed him to remake himself into a successful man.

## Elizabeth O'Connor

Elizabeth O'Connor moved to Melbourne with her husband and children in January 1992. Although she had reservations about moving, once she arrived she loved Melbourne. The O'Connor family stayed in Melbourne until 2004, when most of the family returned to Wellington.<sup>14</sup>

### *Memory in Elizabeth's narrative*

Many of Elizabeth's autobiographical memories were emotional. She recalled a number of strong negative memories. She found her Karori primary school a rough, punitive environment. Her first memory of school was of being '*absolutely terrified*' at being left behind by her mother. Another emotional memory was the experience of being a single mother when trying to finish her university degree. She glossed over the strain of single parenthood at first but later on in the interview she became more open:

*Oh, massive struggle. I was supposed to do it [her Honours year] over two years but in the first year I couldn't do it at all because she[her daughter] was so unsettled and never slept. And I was just getting to grips with motherhood. So I really did it all in the second year. I nearly dropped out at one stage because it was just so hard. But my mother said that she would take over looking after Mardi for most of the day. So I was with her until 11 in the morning and then I'd go down to the library and I'd work from 11 to 11 and then I'd come home. My father would pick me up when the library closed. I wouldn't have got through without that because I had to write a dissertation and I had four papers and I was really behind. So it was hard, but I got there, I got there in the end. Yeah, I'm glad I did that. I really enjoyed Honours. It was a great break and it was really great to be able to use my mind.*

Once again, like Liz, she ends on a positive note, reassuring herself that the difficulties of study were worth it. Elizabeth had other upsetting emotional memories of moving to Wellington with her young family from sunny Hawke's Bay. As her husband worked long hours she felt isolated and depressed. Due to her gloom, she was daunted by the prospect of migrating to Melbourne. She described her emotions of the sleepless night before her departure graphically: '*I'd gone beyond stress. I was so stressed I was actually very calm. I was flat-lining really.*' Another painful memory was leaving her two eldest grown daughters in Melbourne when she and the rest of her family returned to live in Wellington in 2007.

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<sup>14</sup> All information and quotations taken from O'Connor, interview.

Indeed, all of Elizabeth's children were very important to her and she asked me not to mention aspects of their story out of concern for them.

Correspondingly, Elizabeth also had many happy, passionate emotional memories. One such memory was her participation in the anti-Springbok tour protests in 1981:

*You get caught up in something. You believe it passionately too. I think when you're very young you become involved in it and you get caught up in the passion of the moment. It was a great feeling. It's a great feeling of both identity and strength and power of numbers and feeling that there are other people who think like you and you're really trying to make a difference.*

Likewise, she fondly remembers intense discussions during her first year at university with an 'amazing group of people' who had 'the passionate sort of identification with ideas' as her. She also had positive memories of experiencing Australian flora and fauna with her family. Her response to New Zealand's landscape was even more pronounced. Her visit to Cape Reinga was a spiritual experience: 'I felt this was the path that people travelled when they die. They come up this way and they come to Cape Reinga and then they go on. I had that strong feeling very much when I was there. It was a very strong spiritual association. It was moving'. Elizabeth's trip to Cape Reinga was also important because most of her family was with her. The importance of her nuclear family, her husband and five children, recurred throughout her narrative.

Elizabeth's strongest memories were not only emotional; they had a strong thematic undercurrent of the importance of belonging. Although she stated early on in her interview that she disliked 'anything organised' at several points she talked about being involved in something larger than herself. The anti-tour protest was one example of this. Another example was her transformation into a fanatical Melbourne Aussie Rules supporter:

*There was something about them [the Fitzroy team]<sup>15</sup> that captured my heart. They just became a passion for me. They were a team that wasn't doing too well and so when they won the joy was just so intense that it was fantastic. I don't know why, I still can't explain it ... There's something about the game. It's also the fact that it was tribal. It was part of the culture there ... This is a family thing. A lot of families go and the MCG when it's packed out with sixty thousand people is an amazing arena. And of course with all my classical knowledge ... it tapped into feelings about Greek Theatre for me. Because ... in the greater Dionysian festivals when they used to have the big plays presented everyone would go. And so I used to think it was like that, you know the whole community goes: old people, young people, men, women and children. Everyone goes to the footy. It's kind of also – the MCG is like the coliseum but without the blood. But it's just a mighty arena.*

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<sup>15</sup> The Fitzroy team merged with the Brisbane Bears in 1996 to form the Brisbane Lions

This quote clearly highlights Elizabeth's enjoyment in participating in the emotional theatrical atmosphere of footy games.

On the other hand, one of the things Elizabeth found hardest about Australia was the sense that she was no longer in her own country. She missed having a shared cultural background and history with those around her:

*You don't have that shared historical memory with the people around you. People of my age here, we have certain sites of residence you could say. Things like the Rainbow Warrior or Springbok Tour or 1973 when New Zealand sent a protest ship to Mururoa. All of that is going to resonate strongly with people my age. Either we were for that or we were against it but we were living through it. And when you live in another country those things are not important ... People would often talk about parts of Victoria, where their family [came from]. They talk a lot about their family history and it would make me think about my own family history. But it's kind of meaningless there because no one knows about Balclutha or Maheno or for the O'Connors, Westport or Appleby. Those are not places that have meaning there. So you kind of lose your historical identity as a migrant I think.*

Her memories reveal that living in Australia gave her a sense of not quite belonging. Even when she followed the Fitzroy team so closely, this made her feel 'like a New Zealander who lives in Melbourne' rather than an Australian.

Indeed, a related theme is Elizabeth's insistence that she continued to identify as a New Zealander. She recalled the first time when she flew back to New Zealand. Looking out from the plane window she could see the Southern Alps from halfway across the Tasman:

*It was an amazing, amazing sight and I knew then I could never call Australia home. I knew I would never, and I never did. So even though I lived there I never called it home. And we became Australian citizens, Liam didn't, but we all did. But I always described myself as an Australian citizen, not an Australian.*

Elizabeth and her family still supported New Zealand rugby and cricket teams even after becoming Australian citizens. They often talked to their Australian friends about New Zealand history and society. Elizabeth's sense of belonging revolved foremost around her immediate family, and then extended to her current location and interests. Behind these more immediate concerns, she felt herself to be a Pākehā with a spiritual connection to the land and history of New Zealand.

### ***Causative reflection in Elizabeth's narrative***

Elizabeth's narrative was full of causative reflection. When she talked about her childhood she often commented on how early events and situations affected her. Her year in America with her parents made her identify as a New Zealander. Growing up in Wellington politicised

Elizabeth and gave her a permanent affection for hills. Her Euro-centric education instilled a love of the classical period. Throughout her migration narrative she often sought to explain and understand her emotional responses from her present perspective. At several stages Elizabeth reflected on why she had felt so miserable in Wellington before she migrated to Australia. She suggested that she had post natal depression, missed the warm Hawke's Bay weather in windy Wellington, and struggled looking after her four children while her husband worked long hours. Likewise she reflected that her fears at leaving New Zealand, while logically unfounded, were based on the uncertainty of the situation: *'When you migrate you're launching yourself into the unknown. You cannot know what's ahead. No one can. And I think that's just as true if you're going to Australia as if you're coming from Afghanistan to Australia'*. Elizabeth also explained the reasons behind her reactions to Australian society. She was horrified at the racism against Aboriginal Australians demonstrated by white Australians and reasoned that her response derived from having lived in the Hawke's Bay where her daughter went to a bicultural school. Elizabeth also worked in the Ministry of Women's Affairs prior to migration where she learnt much about *The Treaty of Waitangi* and biculturalism. Likewise, when describing her enthusiasm for Aussie Rules she recognised part of the attraction was its similarities to the coliseum games she knew about from her love of classical history.

In our interview Elizabeth identified two major turning points in her life; the first was the birth of her first daughter, the second was migration. Significantly Elizabeth compared migration to having children as a major life changing event: *'Migration is like having children in that you have your life before children and you have your life after children. Your children bring great joy but there's also pain along the way. I think that's true of any mighty life decision, such as migration'*. Having a baby when she was only 21 changed Elizabeth's life. Although being a young single mother was difficult, she viewed it as a transformative event which made her *'grow up in a flash'*:

*When you become a parent it's a transition anyway, whether you're 39 or 21. Your life is before you were a parent and after, and nothing is ever the same. I think when you're 39 you've actually taken on some adult responsibilities. But I do think when you do that younger, it is a very quick transition. You're suddenly responsible for another human being ... I think that makes you grow up because your life before when you were carefree has gone. It has really gone.*

Elizabeth had four other children with her husband and her family has been a hugely important factor in all her subsequent decisions. The importance of her family is revealed in her reflections on how migration affected her. She clearly identified migration as a turning point. She felt that moving to Australia was '*a critical point in my life story*' which '*changed my life*'. Elizabeth also felt that migration made her more sympathetic of other migrants' experiences. However, unlike many other migrants, she made little comment on how migration affected her sense of self or career success. Rather, she dwelt on how migration had affected her family. Elizabeth stated that although she will always be a New Zealander, '*my heart is always with my children too and that's the most important thing to me ... it's whanau before whenua*'. Therefore her major concern about migration was its impact on the individual members of her family. While returning to New Zealand was beneficial for her husband and one son, her other children found the move more difficult. Two daughters stayed in Melbourne. Elizabeth reflected that migration had split her family and in some ways regretted their decision to return to New Zealand.

### ***Imaginary pasts, futures and regrets in Elizabeth's narrative***

Elizabeth stated that she had considered an alternative past. She reflected that migrating started a parallel life, where she always wondered what might have been if they had not moved. But she did not give any details as to how she thought her life would have been different. The closest she came was suggesting that things would have been easier if the family had not returned to New Zealand in 2007. Staying in Melbourne would have prevented the geographical separation of their nuclear family unit; something Elizabeth regretted.

Elizabeth rationalised her regrets about returning to New Zealand, but nonetheless still felt sad about the division of her family. She, her husband, and three younger children returned to New Zealand after a decade in Melbourne. Elizabeth and her husband were dreaming of the New Zealand landscape. Elizabeth's husband, in particular, missed his extended family. But after their return Elizabeth longed for her two eldest daughters (who stayed behind in Melbourne) terribly. She stated that she regretted the move back to New Zealand '*in lots of ways, in many many ways, in every way*' and that if she had known how it would feel she would not have done it. But she also emphasised that if they had not returned to New Zealand she would always have worried about her husband missing New Zealand. When I asked her if

she would do anything differently she said ‘Yes’ but followed this by an attempt to reconcile herself to the decision to return:

*Oh yes, I’d stay in Australia ... But then you’re never given that option. It’s all hindsight. I think you can only do what you think is right at the time. So fortunately we’re never given that option. So you just have to live out what you do really.*

She also reflected on the positives that had come out of the return to New Zealand: special family events, holidays in beautiful parts of New Zealand, and a confirmation of her identification as a New Zealander.

Elizabeth also comforted herself with the expectation that the family would probably return to live in Melbourne. Holding on to this imagined future allowed her to foresee a resolution to her regrets. By rejoining her two eldest daughters, and taking her other children back to Melbourne her ‘split family’ would hopefully be reunited. She and her husband still owned their house in Melbourne which reassured her that return was possible and probable. Indeed, Elizabeth in spite of having said earlier that New Zealand was her home, tripped herself up by saying she was thinking of ‘going back home’:

*So we do have our option of going back home, I mean going back to Melbourne. What did I say? That was quite revealing wasn’t it? I think of that house ... no matter how alien I found Melbourne at times, that house where I raised my five children was my home. That was my true home I think. I can see that now. So I suppose that’s the home I’m thinking of going back to. Not Australia in itself, but that house where I raised my children.*

This quote is a very telling retrospective reflection. When Elizabeth was in Australia, she always called New Zealand home. But with the passage of time back in New Zealand and separation from part of her family she came to see her house in Melbourne as home. Her reflection on home illustrates the centrality of her children in her life narrative.

### ***Major themes in Elizabeth’s narrative***

Several observations arise from an in-depth examination of Elizabeth’s narrative. The first is that she was a very sensitive and reflective narrator. Her memories are often highly emotional. She sought to understand and explain her past decisions and feelings to an unusual degree. Her narrative also showed a strong theme of the importance of belonging, demonstrated by her participation in protests and support of the Melbourne Fitzroy Aussie Rules team. Elizabeth was also keenly aware of her own sense of national identification. She was interested in the idea of home and reflected how home for her was New Zealand, but also her house in Melbourne. The overriding theme of her narrative was her concern for her



husband and children. This shaped her view of migration, her perception of her life story, her regrets about the past, and hopes for the future. The most important place for Elizabeth to belong was her nuclear family unit.

## Conclusions

The modified *Listening Guide* methodology I have developed is a useful addition to oral history narrative analysis approaches. It helps researchers immerse themselves in individual narratives and encourages them to be specific about their terms of inquiry and analysis. In this chapter I use close reading criteria derived from oral history theory on memory and narrative. Looking at the creation process, quality, and content of memories reveals the events which narrators remember clearly and choose to weave into their life story. Identifying causation exposes the extent to which narrators come to understand their past upon reflection, revealing how they explain their life story to themselves and others. Narrators' counterfactual alternative pasts expose their regrets, and highlight the value they place on migration as a pivotal life moment. Investigating the content and form of migrants' narratives reveals that migrants compose life stories which validate their past lives and reconcile them to their current situation. I recommend this approach to other oral historians, who will find that adapting this methodology to suit their own needs clarifies their analytical criteria and provides fresh insight into individual narratives.

The above findings also reveal that analysis of migration in the context of a full life history is extremely valuable. Investigation into migration should not be restricted to the years immediately surrounding the event as moving country is a process which reverberates throughout migrants' lives and life stories. Other spheres of experience such as childhood, family, work, and sport are all part of the ongoing migration journey. Narrators themselves pull together events from all periods of their life to make sense of their migration. For example, when George reflected on the causes of his permanent migration to Australia, his childhood memory of receiving his dying father's prophecy of his leaving New Zealand was just as meaningful as his young adult desire for a cheaper car.

Migrants made sense of their life history by composing their life around key themes which validated and explained their life decisions. These narrative themes were unique to each narrator. Even though I asked very similar questions about their life course and migration

experience, migrants' responses were different. Liz's, George's, and Elizabeth's narratives were ostensibly alike; all migrated successfully, returned many times to New Zealand, retained links with their families, and have happy, close nuclear and extended families. But on close analysis their thematic emphases were quite different. For Liz, successful migration was finding adventure and retaining family links; for George, it was a self made success, and a desire to help other Māori achieve this; and for Elizabeth, it was a united family and a sense of belonging.

Migrants' one thematic commonality was their need to make sense of their life history in the present by narrating their life in ways which emphasised growth, optimistic outcomes, and correct choices. Almost all the migrants I interviewed constructed their life story as coherent, and ultimately positive. Most migrants' explained away or accepted their regrets. New Zealand migrants to Australia, whether they returned, stayed, or moved on, framed migration as a key aspect of their life story without which their life would have been different and almost certainly poorer.

# Conclusion

This thesis is the first in-depth study of Kiwi migrants' personal experiences moving to Australia during the second half of the twentieth century. New Zealanders are a significant migrant group in Australia. In 2009, New Zealand-born people made up 2.4 percent of Australia's resident population. This makes New Zealand the second largest single country contributor to Australia's overseas born population.<sup>1</sup> Yet in spite of their pervasive presence, Kiwis in Australia are largely unacknowledged by migration historians. This thesis has demonstrated how the existing body of academic studies on New Zealand migration to Australia is limited. Yet, the movement of New Zealanders to Australia from the late 1960s to the early 1990s constitutes a dramatic migration trend, deserving of qualitative historical analysis. My research widens and deepens our understanding of this significant trend, by treating Kiwis' moves to Australia as a migration. This approach reveals that although New Zealand migrants' experiences differ from those of more traditional migrant groups, Kiwis in Australia still exhibit many typical migration motives, aspirations, observations, and relationship patterns. Indeed, this thesis addresses a notable omission in the literature by exploring Kiwi migrants' personal migration experiences, in particular their aspirations and relationship dynamics. I show that migrants' relationships are an integral part of all stages of the migration journey. Furthermore, my use of oral history methodology and narrative analysis provides new insights into how narrators construct their migration stories.

In order to explore the experiences of Kiwi migrants to Australia I adopt a number of current theoretical approaches used by migration historians and social scientists. The first of these approaches is transnationalism; the multiple connections linking people and institutions across the borders of different nations. As Stephen Vertovec points out, transnationalism is such a popular concept that academics use it to describe a dizzying array of phenomena.<sup>2</sup> In order to avoid confusion, in this thesis, inquiry is limited to Portes' definition of transnationalism: activities initiated by non-institutional individuals and groups.<sup>3</sup> Focusing on Kiwis' transnational connections highlights the fluid, personal, informal, and constant nature of Kiwi migrants' trans-Tasman relationships. Transnational approaches also recognise the

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand, "New Zealanders in Australia."

<sup>2</sup> Vertovec, "Conceiving and Researching Transnationalism."

<sup>3</sup> Portes, "The Debates and Significance of Immigrant Transnationalism."

ongoing nature of migration. Accordingly I pay particular attention to Kiwis' experiences of return and onward migration.

A second vital theoretical perspective is that of networks. Once again, the focus is on relational rather than economic networks. Analysing Kiwi migrants' links with family and friendship groups on both sides of the Tasman reveals the importance of relationships at every stage of migration. Furthermore, as Louise Ryan argues, applying network concepts highlights that not all relationships are the same.<sup>4</sup> Kiwi migrants rely on transnational and local networks for different types of support. Migrants' relationship needs change during different stages of migration.

Thirdly, I apply theories on migrants' national identification and use of culture to my discussion of Kiwis' feelings about where they belong. Following Brubaker, I avoid creating a reifying definition of New Zealand national identity.<sup>5</sup> Instead this thesis charts the ways in which Kiwi migrants demonstrate their changing feelings of longing, belonging, and identification by studying their use of external cultural symbols. Applying migration theories to my study of Kiwi migrants to Australia provides original analysis on Kiwis' experiences of migration to Australia and situates these findings within a larger context.

This thesis is also heavily influenced by oral history theory and its associated disciplines of memory studies and narrative analysis. In my research, I closely followed oral history methodological practices and ethical recommendations. The thesis's content is informed throughout by personal narratives – both written and spoken. My analysis of Kiwi migrants' motives, transnational connections, relationship networks, and national identification was only possible because I could access their 'lived interior of migration processes' via their personal narratives.<sup>6</sup> I agree with Alistair Thomson's argument that oral history methodology offers unique contributions to migration studies. Migration oral histories document otherwise silent voices, demonstrate the complexity of the migration process, illuminate class, gender and intergenerational experiences, and highlight the retrospective nature of migration stories.<sup>7</sup> Whereas some critics distrust reflective oral history interviews as primary sources, I concur

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<sup>4</sup> Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood."

<sup>5</sup> Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'."

<sup>6</sup> Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes, "Some Reflections of Migration and Identity," in *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories, Vol. III, Migration and Identity*, ed. Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 14.

<sup>7</sup> Thomson, "Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies."

with Portelli's assertion that 'oral sources are credible but with a *different* credibility'; oral history may be factually incorrect but it is still psychologically 'true'.<sup>8</sup>

The final chapters of the thesis engage closely with theories of memory and narrative to explore the reflective side of oral history. This thesis not only analyses Kiwis' migrations to Australia; it also investigates how migrants remember and retell their migration stories. By modifying the *Listening Guide* methodology I suggest a new approach to the already rich field of oral history narrative analysis. Using the *Listening Guide's* close reading style of analysis reveals how people use autobiographical memory, causation, and counterfactual reflection to create life stories which validate their past decisions and current situation.

This thesis's first key argument is that Kiwis who move to Australia are migrants, and that their migrant experience deserves to be studied. In migration literature, academics often study migrants who move to new countries dissimilar to their own. A traditional depiction of migrants is found in *The Immigrants*, a book which presents the oral histories of many different migrants to Australia. Most of these stories describe migrants' experiences of exploitation, discrimination, hard work, language difficulties, homesickness and gradual assimilation.<sup>9</sup> Scholars often study migrants who travel great distances or cluster together in migrant cultural enclaves in their new land. By these criteria, New Zealanders in Australia hardly seem to qualify as migrants. Due to their cultural similarity to Australians, most Kiwis found work easily, suffered only mild discrimination and did not live in migrant enclaves. Although Kiwis were teased for their accent and nationality they encountered few serious communication problems. As Chapter Six argues, New Zealanders in Australia demonstrated low levels of groupness. Kiwi migrants were invisible migrants, integrating into Australian society without trauma. Furthermore, trans-Tasman travel was relatively affordable and fast. Returning home, whether temporarily or permanently, was always an option. Indeed, many Kiwis were accidental migrants who only intended to holiday in Australia.

But in other ways, Kiwis did experience Australia as migrants. Interviewers of Jewish women who migrated to Australia after World War II found that their narrators' senses informed their strongest migration memories.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Kiwi migrants' first sensory impressions of

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<sup>8</sup> Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different," 37.

<sup>9</sup> Wendy Lowenstein and Morag Loh, *The Immigrants* (Melbourne: Hyland House Publishing, 1977).

<sup>10</sup> Langfield and Mclean, "'But Pineapple I'm Still a Bit Wary of'."

Australia remained vivid due to Australia's different climate, landscape, and society. While most Kiwis did not experience extreme culture shock, the differences between Australia and New Zealand often created a sense of dislocation. Hammerton and Thomson make a similar observation about British migrants to Australia, noting that 'even the most subtle changes contributed to a disquieting sense of disorientation'.<sup>11</sup> And while most Kiwis' feelings of surprise at Australia's surface differences faded over time, several deeper societal incongruities remained. Some migrants felt that Australia was more sexist. Most Kiwis disliked Australians' negative attitudes towards Indigenous Aboriginal Australians and prided themselves on New Zealand's supposedly superior race relations with Māori. Indeed, although Kiwi migrants easily assimilated into Australian society, most continued to identify as New Zealanders. Many other migrant groups in Australia retain their national culture by forming migrant enclaves and cultural organisations.<sup>12</sup> Kiwis displayed their national loyalties by purchasing New Zealand food, furnishings, and memorabilia. Many migrants also supported New Zealand sports teams. Significantly, New Zealanders were slow to become Australian citizens; partly out of their ability to settle permanently without applying for a visa or residency, but also due to their New Zealand loyalties.

A central aspect of this thesis's approach is to view migration as a long-term journey. Studying Kiwi migrants' experiences after migration confirms that moving to Australia was an ongoing experience, which varied over time and between individuals, but never ceased to matter. Although the spoken and written narratives I use come from a reflective viewpoint, created about 15 to 45 years after the initial migration, they still reveal migrants' changing attitudes and decisions. For example, Chapter Seven argues that Kiwi migrants' feelings about the Australian and New Zealand environments chart their evolving sense of belonging. Some Kiwis never stopped missing home and longed for the New Zealand landscape, making it a symbol of purity, rejuvenation, and nostalgia. Many Kiwis initially experienced Australia as a foreign place but over time grew to appreciate its unique landscapes and weather. The passage of time could also change Kiwis' perception of home. As expected, Kiwis' feelings of belonging depended on their own private relationships, personality, and past. Some Kiwis became loyal Australians while others adamantly remained New Zealand citizens. The

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<sup>11</sup> Hammerton and Thomson, *Ten Pound Poms*, 124.

<sup>12</sup> For example, Vietnamese in Australia decorate their homes and gardens in Vietnamese fashion, live in Vietnamese spaces such as Cabramatta, and celebrate Tet together. Thomas, *Dreams in the Shadows*.

majority realised gradually that although New Zealand still claimed their national loyalty, over time Australia had become their ‘family home’.

Kiwi’s continuing migration experiences are highlighted by analysis of their ongoing movements after their initial migration to Australia. Chapter Nine affirms claims by migration historians such as Marjory Harper that the academic neglect of return and onward migration needs to be reversed.<sup>13</sup> Even after their first relocation, many migrants moved again in order to meet their personal goals. International travel often fulfilled the dreams of travel, relationship success, and career gains that first inspired migration to Australia. Internal moves within Australia were usually a response to migrants’ career and family aspirations. Large numbers of Kiwi migrants to Australia returned to New Zealand, which illustrates the continued strength of migrants’ familial and nostalgic bonds to New Zealand. But many return migrants found moving home more difficult than expected; they were surprised to find that New Zealand and they themselves had changed. Over half of my sample of return migrants ended up moving back to Australia. Kiwis’ return and onward movements signal that migration was not a one-off decision. As travel became increasingly affordable and accessible, many Kiwis continued to move to new places, chasing dreams of an ideal career, family situation, and lifestyle. The frequency of these further moves reinforce that return and onward migration are a central aspect of migration history which should not be ignored.

This thesis’s second key argument is that relationships played a vital role in Kiwis’ migrations to Australia. Part of my emphasis on relationships is due to the lack of research on this aspect of New Zealanders’ migration to Australia. Demographic and policy analyses generally emphasise external structural factors, but personal narratives show that at all stages of the migration journey, other people influenced, and were affected by, New Zealanders’ decision to move across the Tasman. Chapter Three reveals that private relationships and family aspirations were key factors in motivating Kiwis’ decisions to move to Australia. Some migrants escaped unhappy relationships in New Zealand while others followed loved ones to Australia. As Chapter Four demonstrates, Kiwi migrants also often needed to consider the effect of moving on their partner and children. Even after the decision was finalised, New Zealand friends’ and family’s reactions greatly influenced the tenor of leaving. Chapter Nine reinforces the significance of relationships in later migration decisions. The

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<sup>13</sup> Harper, *Emigrant Homecomings*.

major reason for return migration to New Zealand was the desire to rejoin New Zealand family networks. On the other hand, as Chapter Six reveals, close family relationships created powerful ties to Australia. Australian-born romantic partners and children often bound migrants to an Australian future, even when they personally preferred the New Zealand lifestyle.

Focusing on Kiwi migrants' relationships also emphasizes that Kiwis did have a migration experience in Australia. Migration theorists such as Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, John Bodnar, Louise Ryan, and Mary Chamberlain argue that migrants' social and kinship networks are a key explanatory aspect of the migrant experience.<sup>14</sup> This thesis reveals that negotiating local and transnational relationships was one of Kiwis' most important migration tasks. Moving to Australia usually left most Kiwis bereft of close and supportive relationships. Australian contacts played a vital role in easing new migrants into their new life. Making friends within local networks helped New Zealand migrants settle into Australian society. Groups, workplaces, neighbourhoods, and schools were all important access points to social networks that provided a sense of belonging, practical assistance, and company. Some Kiwis bonded with other New Zealand and international migrants who shared their experiences of dislocation. But Australian-based networks, while invaluable, could not fulfil all of Kiwi migrants' emotional needs. Many Kiwi migrants, women in particular, greatly missed their New Zealand-based family and friends. As Chapter Eight highlights, most Kiwi migrants kept in close touch with New Zealand friends and families, aided by relatively cheap and fast communication and travel. Particularly at times of stress and upheaval, transnational connections were important in providing emotional support. This support went both ways. When migrants had children in Australia they increased communication with New Zealand kin and received visits from family eager to help out. Years later when migrants' New Zealand parents grew frail, migrants often returned to their homeland more regularly to provide care and company. The death of migrants' family members usually lessened (although also occasionally revived) their communication with New Zealand. Kiwi migrants' use of networks parallel other migrant groups' experiences, revealing that New Zealanders

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<sup>14</sup> Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, "The Life History Approach to the Study of Internal Migration," *Oral History* 7, no. 1 (1979); Bodnar, *The Transplanted*; Ryan, "Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood"; Chamberlain, "Family and Identity."



who moved to Australia faced the common migration concern of creating and maintaining local and transnational relationships.

The third argument of this thesis is that analysing Kiwi migrants' oral history narratives gives invaluable insights into how they compose their past from the perspective of the present. A critical analytical approach helps us understand how oral histories are created as a source, and notice the underlying biases influencing their creators. Firstly, analysis reveals that not all past events are equally memorable. Identifying narrators' useage of strong autobiographical memories shows which types of stories narrators remember and retell. It reveals that moments of unexpected difference, nostalgia, strong emotion, humour and personal vindication are often the building blocks of a life history. These types of memories are important because they entertain listeners, are inherently memorable, and explain the narrators' current identity. Secondly, studying narrators' use of causation reveals their desire to compose a past that is coherent, convincing, and has explanatory power. As Porter Abott states, causation normalizes and gives meaning to a story.<sup>15</sup> And thirdly, looking at migrants' counterfactual reflections highlights that oral histories are not limited to the factual past; reflection includes imaginative reasoning about what might have been. Narrators often used these alternative pasts to justify their decisions. As Chapter Ten points out, counterfactual thinking also leads to regrets. Narrators' stories demonstrated the tension between admitting past mistakes but still creating a coherently positive life story. Narrators' biases towards validation and meaning certainly warp their depiction of their past but do not disqualify personal narratives as a useful primary source. On the contrary, oral histories are rich in emotion, imagination, personal detail, and insight precisely because they are a product of narrators' ever-evolving struggle to understand how their past has made them who they are in the present.

Narrative analysis of oral histories confirms that Kiwis who moved to Australia did see themselves as having a migration experience. James Hammerton, in his research on British migrants to Australia, argues that his narrators saw migration as a key life turning point.<sup>16</sup> In their causative reasoning, Kiwi narrators also pinpointed their migration as the event which changed their lives and shaped their current personality. Similarly, when making

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<sup>15</sup> Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, 44.

<sup>16</sup>Hammerton, "'Family Comes First'," 24.

counterfactual reflections, migrants identified their move to Australia as the moment from which they imagined alternative lives. Even migrants who only intended to visit Australia but ended up staying on almost by accident retrospectively felt that their migration was a central part of their life story. The importance of migration to Kiwis was also demonstrated in the way that it affected all areas of their life story. The close analysis used in the final chapters shows that narrators linked their childhood experiences to later migration decisions and attributed their current situation to the long-ago move to Australia. Although narrators' individual stories were all shaped by personal themes and experiences, almost all Kiwi migrants described migration as a positive, pivotal event in their life history.

Finally, personal narratives, in particular oral histories, add depth, pathos, and detail to our understanding of New Zealand migration to Australia in the latter twentieth century.

Academic oral history tends to fragment individual narratives for the purposes of wider generalisation and analysis.<sup>17</sup> In this thesis I hope that the *Listening Guide* style approach to analysing three individual stories, and the vignettes in other chapters, demonstrate the value of studying a migration story in the context of a full life history. Kiwi migrants' narratives provide new insights into the emotional side of migration and remind us that moving country is a personal experience rather than just a faceless economic trend. This thesis aims to paint a rich picture of migrants' varied motives, considerations, encounters, and feelings as they left New Zealand, created a new life in Australia, and sustained trans-Tasman connections.

Descriptions of Kiwis' migration to Australia as a 'brain drain' are unduly negative and misleadingly simplistic. Kiwis who moved to Australia were neither traitors nor victims of economic determinism; rather they were individuals making constructive responses to their own personal pressures and aspirations. Moreover, as this thesis demonstrates, Kiwis' migratory movements are increasingly complex and circular. Moving to Australia was often the beginning, rather than the end, of Kiwis' international and trans-Tasman travels. The deeply personal stories of my narrators reveal that migration was a pivotal decision which continues to affect their relationships, careers, lifestyles, and sense of identity to this present day.

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<sup>17</sup> For a discussion of this issue see Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 18.

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# **Appendix A: Correspondence, Consents and Surveys Sent to Participants.**

## **Project information sheet.**

*Rosemary Baird,  
History Department, Room 203,  
School of Humanities,  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch, New Zealand  
Email: [kiwisinaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:kiwisinaustralia@gmail.com)  
Phone: +64 0273316213*

### **INFORMATION**

You are invited to participate as a subject in the research project 'New Zealand Immigration to Australia: late 1960s to early 1990s'.

The aim of this project is to investigate the personal experiences of New Zealanders who migrated to Australia from the late 1960s to early 1990s. Areas of particular interest are the reasons for migration, preparations for the trip, the participants' trans-Tasman connections both before and after migration, the experience of settling in to Australia, possible return migration to New Zealand and the role of hindsight in evaluating memories of migration.

Your involvement in this project will be the completion of a short autobiographical questionnaire, and then the opportunity to write an account of your immigration story. This will be sent to you via email or post, as requested, and then should be returned once completed to the researcher.

You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, including withdrawal of any information provided.

This project will also include in-depth oral history interviews, which will be recorded and then transcribed. Due to limited time and resources not all participants who return a questionnaire will be asked to do an interview. Instead, a sample of participants will be chosen in order to include a representative cross section of migrants. Selection will be based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, date of departure to Australia, background and

geographic spread. You may be contacted after you have completed the questionnaire to see if you would be interested in participating in an oral history interview, conducted by Rosemary Baird. This is entirely voluntary but is an opportunity to have your memories of immigration and life experiences recorded for your family's interest. Once the interviews have been transcribed, copies can be emailed or posted to you, after which you will have the opportunity of thirty days to correct and make any requests as to omissions or changes. If you do not return the transcript within thirty days it will be assumed that you are content for it to be published as is. It should be noted that editorial 'tidying-up' will be done before printing any of the transcript, so the emphasis is more on making factual amendments (names, dates, spelling) than on correcting grammar. You are also able to have a PDF copy of the finished research sent to you at the end of the project if requested.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: the identity of participants will not be made public without their consent. If you do agree to an oral history interview, there will be opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and to specify sections you wish to keep confidential. There is a possibility that the transcribed interviews may be archived in the Oral History Centre in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand. However, your interview will not be archived without your consent and an embargo may be placed on the data if you wish. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, questionnaires, interviews, recorded data and transcriptions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, within a locked office in the secure University of Canterbury History Building.

The project is being carried out as a requirement for a PhD by Rosemary Baird under the supervision of Professor Philippa Mein Smith (History) and Dr. Lyndon Fraser (Sociology), who can be contacted respectively at +64 0-3-364-2462 and +64-0-3-366 7001. They will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

The project has been reviewed *and approved* by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

## Survey

### **New Zealand Immigration to Australia, late 1960s to early 1990s**

Please fill in this questionnaire ONLY if you immigrated to Australia from New Zealand in the period from the late 1960s to early 1990s. If you prefer you may remain anonymous by not filling in your name and address, however if you do so you will not be eligible for a possible follow-up oral history interview. As outlined on the information sheet all information supplied will be held securely and remain confidential.

You are not obliged to answer every question. But please feel free to answer as fully as you like.

1. Full name (including maiden name if appropriate):

2. Current address:

3. Email address:

4. Telephone number:

5. Gender:

6. Religion:

7. Ethnicity:

8. Date of birth:

9. Place of birth:

#### **LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND BEFORE YOU EMIGRATED**

10. What were your parents' occupations:

11. What qualifications did you obtain before leaving New Zealand:

12. Please state in order what occupations you had in New Zealand before leaving for Australia

13. Where did you live in New Zealand before emigration to Australia:

14. What was your relationship status before emigration to Australia:

15. Describe conditions in New Zealand at the time of your departure for Australia (politics, economy, society, current affairs)

#### **MIGRATION**

16. What date did you arrive in Australia:

17. What town/city did you arrive in:
18. Did you migrate to Australia with anyone else: If yes, then who?
19. Where did you first live in Australia:
20. What was your first job in Australia:
21. Describe conditions in Australia at the time of your arrival in Australia:
<b>RETURN MIGRATION</b>
22. Did you ever return to live in New Zealand: If yes, please answer the following questions
23. In what year did you return:
24. Why did you return to New Zealand:
25. Describe conditions in Australia and New Zealand at the time of your departure from Australia:
<b>I would be happy to be contacted by Rosemary Baird with the view of possibly arranging a recorded oral history interview (please answer yes or no):</b>
<p><b>New Zealand Immigration to Australia, late 1960s to early 1990s- Personal Account</b></p> <p>This is an opportunity for you to write out a fuller account of your experiences migrating from New Zealand to Australia. Areas you might want to address are: - your life history leading up to migration - your reasons for wanting to leave New Zealand - why you chose Australia instead of another country - how long it took you to make your decision - the reaction of your family and friends to your emigration - what arrangements you made before you left New Zealand - the existing connections you had with people in Australia before you left - the departure from New Zealand and journey over to Australia - your first experiences settling in to Australia - how you found your first Australian job, house and friends - how you got on with Australians - cultural differences you experienced - how your family has settled into Australia - why you chose to stay in Australia permanently or why you decided to return to New Zealand – your experiences of return migration with reference to the above areas.</p> <p>Thank you so much for answering this questionnaire. The information you provide will be very useful for my PhD on New Zealand immigration to Australia. If you have any queries please contact me at <a href="mailto:rab120@student.canterbury.ac.nz">rab120@student.canterbury.ac.nz</a> or via the History Department at the University of Canterbury, Chch, New Zealand.</p>

## Survey consent form

*Rosemary Baird,  
History Department, Room 203,  
School of Humanities,  
University of Canterbury  
Private Bag 4800  
Christchurch, New Zealand  
Email: [kiwisinaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:kiwisinaustralia@gmail.com)  
Phone: +64 0273316213*

### **‘New Zealand Immigration to Australia; late 1960s to early 1990s’.**

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved if requested (please tick applicable box below with your preference).

☐ I would like to remain anonymous (by use of a pseudonym) in publication of results of the project

☐ I am happy for my real name to be used in publication of results of the project

I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided. To do so I will contact Rosemary Baird.

I note that the project has been reviewed *and approved* by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

NAME (please print):

Signature:

Date:

## **Interview information email**

Dear

I am intending to visit (place) from (arrival date) to (departure date) in order to conduct oral history interviews for my thesis. I really appreciated reading your story and am contacting you to ask if you would be happy to do an interview. However, before you decide if you can participate I'll just outline in a little more detail what the interview would involve.

The interviews need to take place in a private setting with as little background noise as possible in which you feel comfortable. For this reason oral history interviews usually take place at the interviewee's home. If you are not comfortable with this you will need to find another suitable setting. The interview will be digitally recorded on a professional quality digital recorder. This will involve us both wearing a lapel microphone, and I will also wear headphones so as to be able to monitor the quality of the recording.

The interview will be based on a list of questions about your migration experience from New Zealand to Australia. I will send you a copy of these before we meet so that if you want you are able to think about the questions beforehand. However the interview is only semi-structured and will not be bound by the questions. I'm also interested in your more general life story, as the survey you filled out previously indicated. For this reason the interview has the potential to be quite lengthy (a couple of hours). I will try and take a short break each hour though to give us both a rest.

I will most likely be using public transport to get to different interviewees, and for this reason, along with the unpredictable length of the interview will only schedule one (maybe two if necessary) interview per day so that there is no pressure to finish within a restricted time. I also have a limited time in [city] so am hoping some participants will be available to interview on week days.

Once I get back to New Zealand I will begin the process of transcribing. However I need to state that transcribing a full interview is extremely time consuming (approx eight hours of work for every recorded hour) so it may be some time before I can send you the transcript to check over. Once the interviews have been transcribed, copies can be emailed or posted to you, after which you will have the opportunity of thirty days to correct and make any requests

as to omissions or changes. If you do not return the transcript within thirty days it will be assumed that you are content for it to be published as is. It should be noted that editorial 'tidying-up' will be done as part of the transcribing (in other words, I won't write out every 'um' and repetition of a word). Your role is to make factual amendments (names, dates, spelling) rather than correct grammar or rewrite your transcript to 'sound better'. I will also send you an audio copy of your interview on CD if you would like to have this.

If this doesn't sound too daunting and you'd be happy to do an interview I'd appreciate you getting back in touch and indicating all available dates/times you have for an interview during the time I am in....Please let me know as soon as possible so that if you are unable to make time I can approach another participant.

Best wishes,

Rosemary



## Interview consent form

*Rosemary Baird,  
History Department, Room 312  
School of Humanities,  
University of Canterbury  
Christchurch, New Zealand*

### **‘New Zealand Immigration to Australia; late 1960s to early 1990s’.**

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, and I consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved if requested (please tick applicable box below with your preference).

I would like to remain anonymous (by use of a pseudonym) in publication of results of the project

Yes ☐ No ☐

I am happy for my real name to be used in publication of results of the project

Yes ☐ No ☐

I am happy for the photos I have provided to be used in publication of results of this project

Yes ☐ No ☐

I am happy for my interview recording and transcript to be archived in the Oral History Centre Collection at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington, New Zealand.

Yes ☐ No ☐

If you agreed for your interview to be archived you may state if you wish to place an embargo on the data. This will mean other researchers cannot access your interview for a specified length of time.

Yes, for \_\_\_\_\_ years ☐ No, open access is permitted ☐

I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project, including withdrawal of any information I have provided. To do so I will contact Rosemary Baird.

I note that the project has been reviewed *and approved* by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

NAME (please print): .....

Signature:

Date:

## Letter accompanying transcript

Dear

I hope you have received the CD of the interview I sent to you by now. Please note that audio CDs do deteriorate over time so you may wish to download the track on iTunes or some other digital media library in order to safeguard against this. (If you do this you will also be able to burn off more copies if you want to).

Attached to this email is the transcript of your interview. This is for you to read over and correct. As I mentioned previously, please don't rewrite sentences or change grammar in order to make yourself 'sound better'. I have already done some editing in the transcripts (mainly deleting 'ums' and repetitions) and will do further editing if I quote part of the transcript in my thesis. The main focus is just to correct spelling (especially of names of people and places) dates and any other factual errors. I know it can be daunting to see the way you talk typed out but this is part of what makes oral history unique! If you correct this in Word it would be helpful if you could track changes so I can see what you have changed. However, if you don't know how to do this don't worry about it and just change the original document. I would prefer if you did not delete any of the transcript. It is also fine if you prefer to print out the transcript, edit it by hand and then post it to me. If there is a section that you do not wish to appear in my thesis please mark this section and let me know. If I do not hear back from you within 30 days I will assume you are happy with the transcript as is. I have really enjoyed hearing your story again as I typed it out and I hope you will find it interesting to read over too.

If you have any photos that relate to your story and are happy for these to appear in my thesis a scanned copy of these would be much appreciated! If you have requested a pseudonym I would also really appreciate it if you could give me one to use for you. This will mean you can identify yourself if reading the thesis and will also be a great help to me too. And the same for if you want to have a pseudonym for someone else mentioned in your transcript (for example your spouse). Please feel free to contact me with any other questions.

Very best wishes,

Rosemary

# Appendix B: Interview Questions

## Interview questions for New Zealand migration to Australia, late 1960s to early 1990s.

### Life History

Childhood and upbringing in New Zealand  
Family background  
Schooling  
Aspirations  
Further training and choice of occupation/work

### Reasons to emigrate

- When did you first think about going abroad?
- How did you feel about your future in New Zealand? Was that a reason for considering emigration?
- When did you emigrate? Why did you choose that particular time?
- What made you choose Australia? Did you consider any other options?
- Had anyone else you knew migrated (to Australia)?
- What factors did you take into account before deciding to move?
- Did your family and friends approve?
- How did you feel about the people you left behind?

### Perception of Australia

- What knowledge or experience of Australia did you have before you moved?
- Did you know anyone in Australia?
- What were your views of Australia? What did you think life would be like there?

### Moving

- What arrangements did you have to make before you moved?
- How long was there between your decision to move and your departure?
- What were your travel arrangements?
- What did you take with you? What did you leave behind?
- How did you feel about leaving?
- What are your memories of the leave-taking and departure?

### Arrival in Australia

- What were your feelings on arrival?
- Did anyone meet you?
- What were your first impressions of Australia? What struck you most about Australia?
- What were your first sensory impressions of the landscape, plants, and wildlife of Australia?

### Settling In

- Where was your first accommodation? How did you find it? Was it difficult to find accommodation? Where did you go from there?
- How did you find a job?
- Describe your first day/period at work? Were you made to feel welcome?
- Social life: Who did you mix with? (New Zealanders, Australians, other immigrants)
- What sort of things did you do in your social life?
- What were your impressions of Australians' attitude to New Zealanders/New Zealand (Māori, politics, sport, culture, examples of jokes)
- Were you made to feel welcome? What kinds of friends did you make? How did you meet them?
- How did people respond to your accent?

#### Connections with New Zealand

- Were you ever homesick for New Zealand? What sparked this and how did you deal with it?
- What was the homesickness/nostalgia for?
- Did you return to New Zealand?
- How often did you return and for how long?
- For what reasons did you return?
- How did you stay in contact with those in New Zealand?
- How did migration affect your relationships (partners, friends, family, workmates, children both in Australia and New Zealand)? How did they change?
- Did you ever import items from New Zealand because you couldn't get them in Australia?

#### For those who returned to live in New Zealand

- Why did you choose to return to New Zealand?
- How was it readjusting to life back in New Zealand after living in Australia?
- What do you miss about Australia?
- How often do you return to Australia and if so why?
- Would you ever move back to Australia?

#### Life after Initial Immigration – go through life until present day

#### Reflections

- Where is home for you now?
- Do you ever reminisce about your migration experience/early years in Australia? If so, how and with who?
- How does migration fit into your life story?
- If you ever reflect on 'what might have been' if you hadn't migrated what conclusions do you come to?
- Would you do anything different if you were migrating now?
- Do you have any regrets about migrating?

- Do you have particularly strong vivid memories of migration? If so, why so strong?
- What advice would you give to someone considering migration?